GARFINKEL, COMPETENCE AND CONTINGENCY: RESPECTING THE CODES OF PRACTICE

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A thesis submitted to Cardiff Metropolitan University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 2016

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. i
Publications ............................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................. iii
List of Tables ............................................................................................................ iv

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Aim of study ..................................................................................................... 5
1.3 Objectives ........................................................................................................ 5
1.4 Theoretical rationale for the study ..................................................................... 6

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 9
2.2 Coaching and the social.................................................................................... 9
   2.2.1 Power in coaching .................................................................................... 12
   2.2.2 Roles, impression and manipulation ....................................................... 15
   2.2.3 Social interaction and coaching ............................................................... 19
   2.2.4 Context and coach interaction ............................................................... 22
   2.2.5 Micropolitics and coaching .................................................................... 25
2.3 Coach education ............................................................................................... 28
2.4 The ‘complexity of coaching’ debate ................................................................. 35
2.5 Garfinkel and ethnomethodology ..................................................................... 39

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 48
3.2 Locating the research: Ontological and epistemological assumptions ............... 48
3.3 Locating the researcher: Distance, roles and position of the researcher .......... 53
   3.3.1 Issues of positionality: Reflexivity ......................................................... 55
3.4 Ethnomethodological ethnography ................................................................... 59
3.5 Theoretical framework: Ethnomethodology .................................................. 65
   3.5.1 Practical action and accomplishment .................................................... 68
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Accountability and reflexivity</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3 Conversation analysis</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4 Indexical expressions</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.5 Student tutorials (breaching experiments)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Setting the scene: Entering a ‘modern’ football club</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 Doing fieldwork: Procedure</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 Data gathering</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 Data analysis</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.4 Writing up</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Judging this study</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Ethical considerations</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 ‘Doing’ research: Unravelling the fieldwork</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.1 Position</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.2 Practicality</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.3 Participating</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV: RESULTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1 “Lacing up”: Club, context and characters</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 “He’s not quite there for me”: The ‘play well’ code</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 “He’s one of us”: The ‘fitting-in’ code</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 “I only play for the dressing room, sometimes”: A brotherhood</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 “The club needs someone in charge”: Respecting space</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 “We’re going with the best eleven”: Manipulating the code</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Control, security and insecurity: A paradoxical combination</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 What is competence? Social literacy and the accomplishment of codes</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 How do you know? Seeing performance</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 The compliance of ‘seeing’</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 The codes as innovation</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 174
6.2 Revisiting the research aim and objectives .............................................................................................. 176
6.3 A summary of the research findings ........................................................................................................... 177
6.4 Moving forward: Implications of the research findings .............................................................................. 182
6.5 Where next? Future recommendations .................................................................................................... 186
6.6 The research journey: Closing thoughts .................................................................................................... 191

REFERENCE LIST ......................................................................................................................................... 199

APPENDIX A: Informed consent and information .......................................................................................... 232
Abstract

Viewing sport coaching as complex and relational, this thesis used the writings of Harold Garfinkel, who developed ethnomethodological inquiry, as an alternative social theorist to better understand the activity. The aim of this study was to explore and deconstruct the everyday interactions of coaches, through paying specific attention to the context under which such behaviours occur. Accepting that coaching is a social activity, the purpose was to examine the ‘taken-for-granted’ social rules that the coaches and players of Bayside Rovers F.C. (pseudonym), a semi-professional football club, utilised to achieve desired ends. In doing so, the study adopted an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography to observe, participate and describe how the coaches managed, manipulated and influenced others through their ‘social competencies’ (Lemert, 1997). The data were collected over the course of a full domestic season (10 months). Through adopting an iterative approach, the data were subject to a light ethnomethodological analysis, principally drawing upon the work of Harold Garfinkel (1967, 2002, 2006). What is presented then, are four codes that were used to describe and explain the behaviour patterns observed. The codes included; ‘play well’, ‘fitting-in’, the ‘brotherhood’ and ‘respecting space’. More specifically, the ethnomethodological analysis demonstrated how coaches and players ‘actualised’ the codes (Wieder, 1974). In this respect, Garfinkel’s writings are used as a ‘respecification’ of some fundamental aspects of coaches’ everyday work that is ‘seen but unnoticed’ (Garfinkel, 1967). From this perspective, the findings contribute to the increasingly refined body of research acknowledging coaching as a social activity, further highlighting the principal link between sociology and sport coaching.
Publications

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I am indebted to the coaching staff, players and friends of Bayside Rovers F.C. Without you, I would not have a research project. More importantly, I would not have experienced the football, social and personal ‘education’, which has taken me to this point. For that reason, I will always cherish my experiences at Bayside F.C., including the successful and the difficult times. I hope this thesis can stand as a marker of the achievements the football club has reached over recent years.

Throughout this research project, I have lent on numerous scholars and critical friends for commentary, criticism and general discussion. However, Professor Robyn Jones, who nurtured me through every stage of this project, has been a guiding voice through-out. Robyn, you are an inspirational figure and I thank you for your persistent time, effort and guidance. Furthermore, I would also like to thank Dr Kerry Harris for her continued counsel throughout this process. Your critical eye and willingness to share experiences has been invaluable. Thank you both!

I have found Ph.D. study to be an intense and, at times, overwhelming endeavour. My studies have been maintained by extraneous work; bars, hotels and shop floors. I would not want to change this. Rather, I would like to thank all my family, friends and colleagues who have supported and encouraged me to stay disciplined in completing this work.

Finally, to Georgie, my sister, and the rest of the family, the following thesis stands as an artefact to demonstrate that I have not spent the last three and half years ‘lounging around’. I hope this makes you all very proud.
List of Tables

**Table 1:** The basic assumptions underlying the positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms (Sparkes, 1992, p.21).

**Table 2.** Eight “Big-Tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research (Tracy, 2010, p.840).
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

I remember the first live football match I attended. It was a quaint stadium, innocuously tucked behind a housing estate. We parked in the overflow field and joined the sea of red and black shirts that cascaded from the roads. I felt an instant rush of pride as I adjusted the oversized scarf wrapped around my neck. On arrival, the pitch sparkled green, graced with bold white markings, which were accentuated by the floodlights. The stadium was full to capacity. My legs dangled over the red seat and swayed simultaneously with the cheers and relentless clapping. Although my view was frequently interrupted by the jittery man in front, I was instantly a fan; a football fan. The atmosphere was electric and I was hooked. I can vividly recall asking Dad to tell me the name of number 14: James Hayter. I was desperate to be on the pitch. Dad and I only attended the match because of a serendipitous conversation with a neighbour. The football aficionado was a season ticket holder for AFC Bournemouth and offered us tickets for the scheduled game that evening. I’m sure he was only seeking some company, but his infectious passion and enthusiasm for the game had a profound impact on me and undoubtedly influenced my love for football. We left the ground with the noise of the crowd ringing in my ears. Alongside a flurry of obscenities, I had been exposed to a shared world of football. Lemert (1999) would describe my observations, even as a child, as allowing my world as it is to come into being. For me, the social and emotional investment was addictive. Whilst I was young and innocent, I had begun to put into words a social theory of football and it told me something about my social world.

Our ability as social creatures to endure and sometimes enjoy the world comes from knowing something about why things are as they are (Lemert, 1997). Like many talented individuals from small towns, at one point I was a shimmer of hope. I spent several years as an academy player chasing an elusive professional contract but my endeavours never reached the dizzy heights I aspired to. Along the way, I have become all too aware of the harsh nature
of football as reflected in coaching (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne & Nelson, 2012). Coaches preached the importance of technical and tactical abilities, while selection did not reflect such a ‘philosophy’. Rather, coaches favoured height and brawn as their main concerns. Rejection was disguised in familiar coaching rhetoric – “you’re not better than what we’ve got”. The words cripple me, even now. Yet, I cannot help but wonder ‘what if’; what if I had been ‘coached differently’?

Whether or not I had ‘what it takes’ to be a professional is now beside the point, but it is here where my social theory of the dynamics of coaching began to mature. As I sit writing this introduction to my Ph.D. thesis, I believe my perspective of football has developed. The participants in this study, among others, have assisted in changing this view. Of course, my story is not unique. In drawing upon the work of Corrigan (1979), the main reason for pursuing specific research topics are often influenced by biography and background. Therefore, the more I assess and reflect upon the sporting and educational pathway travelled, I am unsurprised by the decision to conduct this research: A modest student with a thirst for sport, I followed a typical educational route to university to study Sport Coaching. In this respect, I perceived ‘coaching’ as an opportunity to remain embedded within the sport; a second chance. Now a practicing coach alongside playing, I have begun to appreciate the complexities of the profession.

The discipline has come to be a bona fide area of study, and with it has come a shift in perspective towards the work of coaches. The stories and insights offered by researchers (e.g., Jones, 2006a, 2009, 2011; Denison, 2007; Potrac et al., 2012) are not just examinations of experience, but lead us into a wider shared world of coaching. The subsequent relations explored in such work are the central mystery of any sociology. Here, sociology has been identified as holding the potential to better understand coaches’ everyday realities not as inconsequential, despite appearing naturally, but fundamental to their coaching competence.
(Lemert, 1997; Jones, Potrac, Cushion & Ronglan, 2011). In this respect, Lemert (1997) reminds us that, more often than not, people get by without thinking all things through. Consequently, if coaching is social and depends on an ability to understand each other, a better understanding of what social competence in coaching encapsulates is required.

Over a decade ago, the case was made for sports coaching research to be sociologically analysed in earnest (Jones, 2000). The subsequent literature has critiqued the unproblematic portrayal previously constructed of coaching, to position the activity as a dynamic social endeavour (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Jones, 2007; Purdy & Jones, 2011). This sociological ‘lens’ has raised the level of critical reflection and analysis, lifting our practical understanding of coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy & Jones, 2011; Jones et al., 2011). In speaking of coaching research as social and problematic, welcome strides have been made in terms of understanding how coaches manage their respective contexts (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Jones, 2007; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). Such work has not been limited in scope to the interactions between just coach and athlete, but extended to coaches and other contextual stakeholders such as managers and other related actors (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). The consequent shift in focus has moved from the ‘what’ and ‘how’ to coach, towards the ‘who’ is coaching (Jones, 2006a; 2009).

This argument has further evolved through the utilisation of micro-sociological perspectives in both empirical and theoretical work (e.g., Jones et al. 2004). The objective here, as pointed out by Jones et al. (2011), reflects an attempt to ‘decode’ the scarcely discussed culture of coaching. In doing so, the purpose has been to use theory to bring “into focus, sharpen and angle our understanding of what might otherwise be a blurred stream of perception” (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 1997, p.228). The ensuing body of work has included the use of sociological frameworks provided by theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (Cushion & Jones, 2006), Michel Foucault (Denison, 2007) and Erving Goffman (Jones,
2006) among others, to better understand the relationships which lie at the heart of the coaching process. Such work has perhaps, above all, attempted to deconstruct and uncover the “constitutive rules of everyday behaviour” (Goffman, 1974, p.5).

The succeeding analysis of coaching has stressed the importance of every gesture, relating to whether (both personal and professional) respect is secured, maintained or lost (Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Jones, 2006, 2007, 2009; Jones et al., 2011). The case has been made that in whatever context it occurs, awareness and a certain mastery of the ‘social component’ is required for effective coaching practice (Lemert, 2004; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008). This idea points towards a specific sociology that Lemert (1997) refers to as our social competence; that is, the basic social logic of how to get things done; the endless “tugging, hinting, proposing, judging, punishing, comforting, depriving and frightening” to reach desired ends (Jones et al., 2011, p.3). This logic is seemingly implicit, unconscious and highly practical, although without it, every new situation would require us to learn anew what to think and how to behave (Lemert, 1997). Yet, the social competency referred to here is not innate or an inborn aptitude. It requires close and sensitive consideration.

In spite of recent developments to capture the everyday endeavours of coaches’ (e.g., Jones, 2006; 2009; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Toner, Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne & Marshall, 2012), specific attention to their unwritten practical accomplishments (social competencies) have been somewhat overlooked. This leaves us with questions akin to ‘blank spaces’ in our understanding as to where and how such behaviours are constructed and learnt. If, then, we are to better understand the ‘taken-for-granted’ practices of coaches and athletes, the ‘ethnomethodological’ insights of Harold Garfinkel hold the potential to make an enduring contribution. In this regard, Lemert (2002) recognised that Garfinkel’s investigation of the rational, mundane and on-going practical accomplishments of individuals has inspired empirical work in many different areas, including medicine and health care, crime and
justice, communications and media, education, and gender, among many others. With that in mind, the foundations of the following thesis originate with the potential contributions and application of Harold Garfinkel and ethnomethodology to coaching.

1.2 Aim of study

Drawing upon the work of Harold Garfinkel (1967, 2002, 2006), the principal purpose of this study is to explore and deconstruct coaches’ and athletes’ everyday interactions, paying specific attention to the rational properties of conduct, as well as to the contextual conditions under which such behaviours occur. Through examining taken-for-granted social rules, the project aims to investigate how coaches and athletes use and manipulate their ‘social competencies’ to achieve desired ends (Lemert, 1997): that is, how coaches manage, manipulate and influence face-to-face interactions and context. These aims will be addressed through a series of interrelated objectives:

1.3 Objectives

a) To consider the importance of context dependent interactions and shared social understandings to coaching practice. How do the social actors ‘get’ there? And what do these shared understandings look like?

b) To explore how coaches manipulate social and contextual interactions. How do the evidenced interactions and context affect each other? How are these interactions negotiated?

c) To examine the consequences of when shared understandings are disrupted. How is the workable (negotiated) consensus re-established? Which power forces are at work, and how are they manifest?
1.4 Theoretical rationale for the study

With the exception of a few notable examples (e.g., Jones, Bailey, Santos & Edwards, 2012; Miller & Cronin, 2012), the work of Harold Garfinkel has yet to permeate much of the coaching research. Garfinkel’s writings coalesced into a sub-discipline of sociology known as ethnomethodology. The perspective treats practical activity, practical circumstances and practical sociological reasoning as topics for empirical study through addressing each commonplace activity as a phenomenon in its own right (Garfinkel, 1967). Garfinkel believed individuals were able to produce and manage settings in a way to make them ‘accountable’; that is, to interact coherently in the absence of formal instruction with little or no interruption (Garfinkel, 1967). The grounding for this analysis is based upon the ‘observable-and-reportable’ interactions between parties, whose skills, knowledge and taken-for-granted competency allow the practical accomplishment of interaction (Garfinkel, 1967; Lemert, 1997). Through close attention to the detailed practices that allow for order in social situations, ethnomethodology offers coaching research a new ‘lens’ to help problematize and challenge the everyday realities of coaching (Jones et al., 2011). In keeping with key contemporary literature (e.g., Jones et al., 2004; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Jones, 2007), Garfinkel’s work can be used to interrogate conceptualisations of contextual ‘variables’ and, consequently, to better appreciate the relationship between context and actor (Miller & Cronin, 2012).

In the pursuit of influencing others, coaching has been increasingly accepted as socially contested (Jones & Cushion, 2006). Thus, the significance of this study lies in further understanding what constitutes coaching social competence. More specifically, the insights of ethnomethodology hold the potential to further illuminate previously unexamined coaching issues, such as, the ‘haecceity’ (‘thisness’) of coaches’ everyday realities (Garfinkel, 2002); that is, the ‘communicated-and-made-communicable-in–just-this-way’ of coaching affairs
(Liberman, 2013). In the words of Garfinkel (2002, p.99), the ‘haecceity’ refers to just-thisness; the “just here, just now, with just what is at hand, with just who is here, in just the time this local gang has”. Garfinkel (2002) suggested ethnomethodological attention to the ‘thisness’ allows for the ‘missing what’ surrounding practical action and the competent practices to be explored. This argument is akin to Lynch (2013), who asserted that the ‘haecceity’ surrounding accomplished practice, such as tacit knowledge, can be ‘dissolved’. Here, rather than accepting such knowledge as mysterious, abstract and unarticulated (e.g., Nash & Collins, 2006), the knowledge can (and is) communicated through descriptors and indicators, which are tied to the specific location (Lynch, 2013). In spite of accepting a mystery to the work of coaches and an uncanny knack or unconscious knowledge, the ‘doings’ of the coaches are taken up as “embodied in local, situated and intelligible practice” (ten Have, 2002, p.5). Therefore, through exploring the ‘haecceity’ of coaching practice, the project offers interesting potential for a different (respecified) understanding of coaching competence and the subsequent interactions and relationships.

As alluded to previously, ethnomethodology’s investigations being concerned with how individuals are able to ‘make sense’ of others’ actions so that social orderliness is constructed, may yield nuanced and interesting results for coaches. However, following Jones et al. (2012), respecting and adhering to such understandings is not enough. Rather, coaches must try to innovate and experiment in light of such work (e.g., Jones, 2006; Toner et al., 2012; Jones, Edwards & Filho, 2016). The writings of Erving Goffman have been an important feature within coaching research in this regard (e.g., Potrac et al., 2002; Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones, 2010; Partington & Cushion, 2012). For that reason, building upon the existing body of work, ethnomethodology’s analytical focus can provide us with a greater understanding of complex social interactions shared between coach, athlete and others, but also help to develop innovative and creative coaches through exploring how
interactions can be appropriately manipulated (Jones et al., 2012). The importance here is that, in order to develop understanding of ‘creativity’ in coaching, the ethno-methods, or the rules, must be respected. Such understanding may then be used to loosen some of the rigid conventions in coaching for more imaginative practice.

In examining the ‘haecceity’ of coaching competence the study supports the case for coaching to be viewed through a sociological theoretical lens. Whilst other sociologists were considered, the justification resonates with Stones (1998, p.5) by advocating that Garfinkel’s writings may shine a torch at a “slightly different angle” to what we already know about coaching. In the words of Lemert, sociology can help to “come out from the dark… into the light of possibility” (Lemert, 1997, p.48). Indeed, Lemert (1999) proposed that putting into words what nobody wants to talk about is what makes social theory worth reading. In this respect, Garfinkel (1967) has put into words an attention, or respecification, of social order that has been taken-for-granted. The argument is akin to previous scholars (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 1999; Jones et al., 2011), who have asserted that social theory takes us closer to the ‘invisible ingredient’ in coaching knowledge. Whilst the principal argument provided for this study builds upon the foundations of previous sociological analysis of coaching (e.g., Jones, 2006a, 2006b, 2009; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008; Potrac & Jones, 2009a), helping to better understand the social guidelines they operate within, Garfinkel’s work can provide us a fresh vocabulary to challenge and embrace the complexities of coaching. This is not to replicate what has gone before, which Goulder (1970) termed as ‘cow sociology’, but to draw upon ethnomethodological writings to explore coaching from a new critical framework.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to examine literature relevant to the study. Its value lies in providing an understanding of research previously conducted, which includes knowledge of methods and other key issues. The significance of the Review also stretches to understanding how and where the study fits in relation to other research; a goal achieved through a structure of progressive ‘narrowing’ (Hart, 1998). The structure of the chapter then, builds upon the Introduction to convey the ‘journey’ undertaken to arrive at the study’s aims. In terms of organisation, the chapter begins with an outline and critique of the research which has adopted a sociological stand-point to analyse sports coaching. This includes subdivisions on coaches’ power, role theory and the coach-athlete relationship. The chapter continues by addressing research within coach education. The later parts comprise the coaching complexity debate, followed by a consideration of interactions in coaching. The chapter concludes by introducing and evaluating the work of Harold Garfinkel and ethno-methodology.

2.2 Coaching and the social

Curiosity about the source of our own behaviour has been a feature for thousands of years, and has increasingly led to the systematic use of science as opposed to religion to understand the world (Giddens, 1997). In this respect, Auguste Comte (1789-1857) coined the term sociology with the intention of applying scientific principles evident in the natural sciences to further understand society (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). His premise was that through better understanding, he could then predict and, consequently, change society. Whilst Comte held a positivist position, investigating the dynamic and complex relationships which exist between people within a range of contexts is still the prime concern of sociology. Sociological inquiry then, aims to help us understand why we are as we are and act as we do, in order to appreciate
how society works and operates. Consequently, according to Giddens (1997, p.2), sociology can be defined as “the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, as its subject matter is our own behaviour as social beings”. In other words, the purpose of sociological inquiry is to examine the relationships, interactions and structures that make up everyday societies. An emphasis is placed upon the social interaction, relationships and the activities which sustain them.

An essential part of this outlook is that “all people, notwithstanding their varied and often separated neighbourhoods or tribes, are connected to each other” (Lemert, 1997, p.xiii). In this respect, Lemert (1999) suggested that social theory examines the known and said about the mundane and concealed; a key to social survival. Lemert (1999) adds that all lay members of societies have social theories, but attention should be paid to professional social theorists as they are more practiced at articulating their social worlds. This notion is supported by Giddens and Turner (1987), who suggested social theory is not the property of any one discipline. Rather, questions about social life stretch across the social sciences and the humanities. With that in mind, the field of sport coaching has been recognised as a part of social life, complete with its own unique series of social symbols and values (Lyle, 2002). This perspective has moved beyond viewing the coaching process as a sequential mechanistic activity of planning and goal-setting (Jones & Wallace, 2005). In doing so, traditional theoretical frameworks and models (e.g., Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Fairs, 1987; Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria & Russell, 1995) have been regarded as rationalistic and failing to capture the dynamic and intricate arena of coaching (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This shift in research has progressed away from the dominant exercise science traditions of psychology and physiology to depict coaches as social beings negotiating a social environment (e.g., Potrac et al., 2002; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2002; Denison, 2007). The attempt here is to sufficiently capture the ‘realities’ within coaching; that is, that social relationships and
contexts for coaches are inextricably linked to the opportunities and confines of human interaction (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003).

The question has since been posed by Jones et al. (2011) that, if coaching really is concerned with social things and how others can be influenced, where do we look to generate a better understanding of it? For Jones and colleagues, sociology has provided the answer; recognising that complexity and meanings negotiated within day-to-day life are the accomplishments of skilled actors (Gardiner, 2000). The sociological perspective advocated is akin to what C. Wright Mills (1959) famously labelled the sociological imagination; that is “thinking ourselves away from familiar routine of our daily lives to look at them anew” (Giddens, 1997, p.3). Mills’ sociological imagination involved the ability to recognise individual troubles as situated in the larger structural forces influencing everyday lives and concerns; that is, to understand familiar troubles as public issues. This is not to say wider structures should be regarded as utterly restrictive; instead, they are also “fragile and precious achievements” repressing social chaos (Goffman, 1974, p.xviii). Nevertheless, in an attempt to break free from associated restrictions, Jones (2007) claimed that critical pedagogical and sociological paradigms can go beyond the known to develop more realistic analysis and knowledge of what coaches actually do, whilst suggesting ways to do it better.

From such foundational knowledge claims, sociology holds the ability to challenge and critique rationalistic views, to ignite academic debate, whilst also enriching the understanding of ordinary people as to why they act and behave as they do (Jones et al., 2011). Various sociological theories and methods have been increasingly used to explore and examine the subject matter of sports coaching (Denison, 2007; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009). In this regard, key developments came from Jones et al. (2004) who targeted power, role and interaction as significant facets of the coaching process. Through drawing upon social theory, coaching scholars have attempted to liberate their
sociological imagination by refining our understanding “of what might otherwise be a blurred stream of perception” (Ely et al., 1997, p.228). Sociologies of coaching then have developed the theoretical lens through which coaching has been analysed, and allowed for a better appreciation of a very complex and multifaceted environment (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009; Purdy & Jones, 2011). Consequently, coaching has come to be recognised as a socially contested arena which requires sensitive understanding of power dynamics (Jones, 2000). The subsequent sections of this Chapter are an attempt to signal, and analyse, some of the salient themes within the coaching literature.

2.2.1 Power in coaching

To develop an understanding of the social sphere of coaching, an emphasis has been placed on power dynamics (Jones et al., 2004). The notion of power is one of the most central concepts throughout sociology with many classical writers providing their own interpretations (e.g., Mills, 1959; Giddens, 1979; Foucault, 1980). Power has been defined as the pervasive “ability to get others to do what you want” (Hardy, 1995, p.xiii). Initially, coaching scholars (e.g., Jones et al., 2004) used French and Raven’s (1959) bases of power framework to theorise the role of the coach. The framework, later refined by Raven (1992), categorized six different forms of power: Legitimate, Expert, Informational, Reward, Coercive and Referential. The typology was also applied by Potrac and colleagues to the actions of elite soccer coaches (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003). Here, the research illustrated the use of legitimate, expert and informational power, as the coaches emphasised the importance of demonstrating ‘expertise’ and acting ‘like a coach’. The purpose was to maintain the respect of athletes. Indeed, the coaches asserted that an inability to adhere to athlete expectation of the role concerning practical adeptness would lead to failure.
Building on this work, Potrac, Jones and Cushion (2007) explored the behaviours of top-level coaches through systematic observation. After collecting data through the Arizona State University Observation Instrument (ASUOI), French and Raven’s (1959) typology of power and Callero’s (1994) work on role theory were utilised to interpret the results. Despite adopting a quantitative approach, Potrac et al.’s (2007) study complimented previous work addressing the personal nature of coaching. The authors concluded that coaches used high levels of instruction and information (expert and informational power) to demonstrate their knowledge. The results also reinforced that top-level coaches negotiated relationships through the use of ‘reward power’ when compared to their less experienced counterparts, while ‘coercive power’ was not a dominant feature. The findings differed from Bloom, Crumpton and Anderson’s (1999) study of an elite basketball coach where ‘scold’ was a strongly featured behaviour. The use of French and Raven’s (1959; Raven 1992) framework identified that coaches draw upon a range of power types to manipulate their environments (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2004). However, the findings neglected to consider how coaches had to be critically aware of the ‘trust’ and ‘respect’ afforded to them by athletes (Jones et al., 2011). Like all classifications then, the features of power cannot be segregated as easily as the typology suggests (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009).

In addition, French and Raven’s analytical framework can be further criticised for assuming that power is exercised by one party over another (e.g., coach over athlete). Consequently, conceptions of power have altered from this earlier work (e.g., Johns & Johns, 2000; Jones, Glintmeyer & McKenzie, 2005) to an understanding of power as omnipresent, constantly changing, renegotiated and reinvented through social actions (Westwood, 2002). This perspective builds upon Potrac et al.’s (2002) call to appreciate various forms of power and resistance within the coaching environment. The resulting literature has adopted more nuanced notions of power through the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. For
example, central to Cushion and Jones’ (2006) study was Bourdieu’s notion of capital. Capital refers to the capacity of an individual or group to impact, change or control situations (Tomlinson, 2004). In this respect, Bourdieu identified several broad types of capital: economic (control over economic resources such as money), cultural (the knowledge and experience of an individual), symbolic (from prestige of the individual), physical (the value of an individual’s body to perform) and social (the affiliation to a certain social group) (Cassidy et al., 2009). The study revealed how the players of Albion FC (a pseudonym) willingly subscribed to an authoritarian coaching discourse, which was frequently harsh and belligerent. The behaviours were perceived as legitimate by the athletes for two main reasons. Firstly, due to the cultural capital afforded to the coaches from their previous playing and coaching experiences (much like French and Raven’s [1959] expert power). The second was that coaches were perceived as ‘gatekeepers’ to a professional contract and future. Subsequently, by complying with the coaches’ demands, the players frequently demonstrated ‘good attitudes’ to increase their capital and manipulate their standing within the academy.

Bourdieu’s work also featured in Purdy et al.’s (2009) study which explored how power was given, acquired and used between an elite rower and his coaches. Modified realist tales were used to convey how one athlete’s (Sean) physical capital affected the coaching environment, as he continued to be selected despite showing less compliance than other athletes (Purdy et al., 2009). The coaches’ actions became increasingly authoritarian as their power was perceived to be challenged; a finding which coincided with the work of Cushion and Jones (2006). In turn, Purdy and colleagues were able to highlight the value of Bourdieu’s notions of ‘capital’ (capacity to change or control situations), ‘habitus’ (relating to decision-making and the wider social structures) and ‘field’ (a social arena) as tools to investigate social practice.
Despite developing our understanding of power within the coach-athlete relationship, both aforementioned studies somewhat failed to appreciate the role of power from (predominantly) an athlete’s perspective. In this regard, the work of Michel Foucault has been increasingly used to develop an understanding of power. Foucault appreciated power as a diffuse phenomenon, which has the ability to be productive as well as repressive (Jones et al., 2011). In this way, Foucault’s writings have been used particularly in terms of how athletes are subjected to power and why they consent to coaches exercising power in the ways they do (Jones et al., 2005; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Cassidy et al., 2009). Key to Foucault’s work is a consideration of the relationship between power and knowledge, which permits the use of power in a disciplinary capacity (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2003). With this in mind, Denison (2007) drew upon Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power to provide a rich account of an underachieving athlete’s performance. Here, Denison was able to use Foucault’s perspective to question his previously held assumptions about poor ‘mental toughness’. In doing so, Denison, as the coach, illuminated how he had become an “agent of normalisation” through unquestioned everyday coaching practices (Denison, 2007, p.376). Through illustrating the intricate relationship between power and knowledge, Denison (2007) provided an example of how sociology can be used to reflect and evaluate coaching behaviours. The article, therefore, builds upon the case for the value of sociology in coaching.

2.2.2 Roles, impression and manipulation

The role an individual adopts is a complex concept and forms one of the most important features of social life. Jones et al. (2002) recognised that alongside power, role and interaction were integral concepts which greatly influence how a coach acts and behaves. More specifically, Biddle (1986) suggested that ‘role’ concerns the positions and expectations persons hold of their own behaviour and those of others. The notion can be deemed important
for how coaches come to know and manufacture different ‘selves’ within context. In this respect, Jones et al. (2002) used Callero’s (1994) role theory to better understand coaches’ roles and wider social influences. Here, it was suggested that when an individual assumes the role of the coach, he or she becomes socialised into displaying particular behaviours they perceive necessary to fulfil that role. However, such performances are not generic, but are shaped by and reflective of existing cultural beliefs. Coaches’ perceptions of cultural beliefs then, can be seen to guide and influence behaviours (Jones et al., 2002). For example, the coaches within Cushion and Jones’ (2006) study demonstrated that their respective coaching personas were highly influenced by the dominant discourse they received as players. Such a notion built upon the work of Jones et al. (2002) to illustrate how an accepted role was not seen to be limiting, but rather as a vehicle for agency to enable a coach to better manipulate dealings with athletes and other stakeholders. This was an idea developed and supported by Jones et al. (2004) in uncovering how coaches consciously used strategies to manipulate their athletes and the situation to their advantage.

Echoing this work, Potrac et al. (2002) found that coaches protected their carefully built up images. In doing so, the coaches used precise instructions, demonstrations, praise and scold to create a social bond with athletes. The coaches were also found to engage in manipulative actions when their images were under threat of being exposed. Consequently, it was concluded that a coach’s role and behaviour reflects both their expectations, and their perceptions of the athletes’ expectations of the coaching role. Building upon this notion, Jones et al. (2002) explored how a particular occupied or ‘acted out’ role is not just to be accepted but should/can be developed through the notion of ‘self-in-role’. Although not Jones et al.’s (2002) original notion, it was claimed here that a role should not be merely complied with, but be tailored to fulfil social and personal needs in realising ‘the self’. Of importance
here is that coaches may then manipulate roles to exceed any preconceived limits in order to gain affection and gratitude from athletes.

Furthermore, recent years have witnessed an upsurge in the use of Erving Goffman’s writings to explore the coach-athlete relationship. This body of work has focused on how top-level coaches present their activities through sustained social performances in controlling the impressions of athletes (e.g., Jones et al., 2003, 2004; Potrac et al., 2002; Jones 2006a). For example, Jones et al. (2004) recognized that coaches engage in conscious strategies, such as, the use of ‘white lies’, charismatic personas and constant face work. Such actions resonated with Goffman’s work on manipulation and morality, as well as considering the ‘right front’ to ensure athletes’ ‘buy in’ to respective programmes and agendas (Jones et al., 2004; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). The impressions identified included displaying supreme confidence, exuding an aura of authority and showing their athletes a ‘human’ side to convince them of their credibility (Jones et al., 2002; Potrac et al., 2002, Jones et al., 2004).

In this light, Goffman’s work was used to help understand the concept of distance (Jones et al., 2004). Here, the coaches under study emphasised the importance of restricting their contact time with athletes to create an image of acting in the latter’s best interest whilst avoiding too close an inspection. In doing so, the coaches aimed to create an environment which allowed a ‘mystification’ and avoided potentially discrediting the performance given (Goffman, 1959). While such work illuminated the intricacies of coaches’ work, Jones (2006a) further challenged our understanding of coaching by providing an auto-ethnography of a dysfluent coach. Through drawing upon Goffman’s (1959, 1963, 1969) writings, this creative fictional story was able to provide a personal account of how role ‘front’, ‘impression management’ and ‘presentation of self’ were inherently linked to his coaching practice. Highlighting the complexities of the interaction order, Jones (2006a) revealed the tensions and the fundamental links coaches have to their audiences’ perceptions. Here,
Goffman’s (1963) stigma was used as a theoretical ‘signpost’ to better interpret the story provided. Goffman’s writings on stigma concerned how individuals managed any discrediting characteristics that could potentially lead to their “disqualification from full social acceptance” (Goffman, 1963, p.3). The account by Jones (2006a) not only used this sensitising framework to address the paucity of work exploring the emotional nature of coaching, but also tested methodological boundaries in coaching research through drawing upon auto-ethnography.

More recently, Goffman’s writings on stigma were featured by Partington and Cushion (2012). A mixed-method approach, which adopted systematic observation and interpretive interviews, identified stigma as a salient feature for novice coaches. In this case, the coaches resorted to acting like a ‘traditional’ coach in order to avoid discrediting their performance. That is, the coaches were consciously engaged in a performance of the ‘right front’ during the match to ensure that the audience (e.g., players, parents, and other coaches) were aware of their role as coaches (Partington & Cushion, 2012). This meant the subsequent interjections were regarded as ‘dramatic signs’ (Goffman, 1959), rooted in the social context, as opposed to being grounded in the pedagogical needs of the athletes. Such action was governed by a pre-occupation with presenting a credible and idealised performance (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2004). In addition, the results highlighted how the coaches’ performances were acutely constructed to satisfy sub-cultural norms; that is, the coaches conducted themselves congruent with the roles, statuses and relationships according to their social order, meaning they could not freely choose their image of self.

In a different light, Jones et al. (2005) explored the combination of role, power and context within the coach-athlete relationship from an athlete’s perspective. Here, an interpretive biography was used to convey the story of Anne, an elite swimmer and her struggles with an eating disorder. The issue stemmed from a conversation with her coach
concerning her weight and eating habits. Subsequently, the swimmer became obsessed with her body image before dropping out from elite competition and developing bulimia. Using the work of Michel Foucault, the authors illustrated Anne’s self-surveillance was exacerbated through a sporting culture where the critical eye of her coach and others led to the disciplining of the self. Like Goffman’s work, Foucault’s writings helped illustrate the complexity of the coach-athlete relationship and, in particular, the precious influence coaches’ have over athletes. Additionally, Jones et al. (2005) identified how a coaches’ need to ‘take charge’ resembled a common discourse within coaching science and coach education. In Anne’s case, the coach not only failed to appreciate the athlete’s individuality, but also legitimized Anne’s conformity with disciplinary power (Jones et al., 2005). Undoubtedly, the context of Anne’s story helped illuminate the complex, multifaceted nature of the coaching process, involving both coach and athlete.

2.2.3 Social interaction and coaching

A coach who seeks to successfully stimulate athletes’ learning will naturally engage and be influenced by the interactions which occur between coach and athlete (Ronglan, 2011). As alluded to above, relationships between the coach and athlete are at the heart of coaching and, therefore, social interaction is fundamental to the activity (Jones et al., 2004). As previously suggested (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006), these interactions are not isolated to just being between coach and athlete but consist of the coach navigating interactions between other coaches, athletes and contextual actors (e.g., parents, staff and administrators). A principal challenge for practitioners then is to cope with the different individuals within a group and their often conflicting agendas (Ronglan, 2010, 2011). More specifically, if coaches wish to create and sustain athlete learning (e.g., Jones et al., 2002), then coaches’ interactions cannot be simply viewed as a separate facet of work. In this regard, Ronglan (2011) suggested social
interaction encompass dimensions of power and knowledge, therefore, reflecting a coach’s ability to manipulate athletes and vice versa. Consequently, the complexity of the activity is increased as power and power relations intertwine within the occurring interactions (Jones et al., 2004; Jones, 2006a, 2007; Potrac & Jones, 2009b).

The sociological perspective provided by Giddens (1979; 1984) suggested that, as social beings, we are able to recognise and internalise social rules to create shared practice. Giddens proposed that we draw upon shared ‘stocks of knowledge’ as guidelines to provide familiarity for interactions. In their absence, every new situation to arise would be accompanied with misunderstandings and ultimately frustration (Lemert, 1997). In this respect, social roles and ‘stocks of knowledge’ provide more predictable behaviour through creating structure to social processes; such as, that of a doctor and patient. Performances like this conform to social rules, or as Jones et al. (2011, p.6) put it, “a dance of agency within a bounded social choreography”. In this respect, Ronglan (2011) suggested that consistently clear expectations within the coaching context can be identified, for example, a pre-match ‘team-talk’ from a coach involves a marked set of behaviours. With that said, Ronglan (2011) also identified that not all interactions are defined; ambiguous situations leave coaches and athletes the opportunity to adjust their role(s) and subsequent interactions. For example, a coach running into a player in a bar; the expected interactions here are unclear when compared to the dyad meeting on a training ground. The latter represents a defined situation where both parties have reciprocal obligations, whereas the former poses an unclear answer whether to address each other as acquaintances, friends or to remain as coach and athlete. In this way, the scenario must be constructed and, therefore, provides an insight to the multifaceted interactions and roles coaches must manage.

In this regard, Goffman (1959) suggested that individuals are not socialised into mechanical roles, social beings can never be reduced to such compliance. Rather, interactions
are governed by the social context. Steve Harrison, for example, recognised “thinking on your feet” as an essential component of a coach’s repertoire (Jones et al., 2004, p.224). This was a point reiterated by Jones and colleagues when identifying the need for coaches to balance interactions between the role played and the role created in relation to contextual and athlete expectation.

The intricate interplay between coach and athlete has been given further attention by Purdy et al. (2008). Here, Purdy, as the principal author, provided an auto-ethnographical account as a coxswain in a rowing context. The athlete-researcher, drawing upon Nyberg (1981) and Giddens (1984), explored the relationship between power and compliance within a national rowing programme. As the research unfolded, the coach’s inabilities to successfully interact with the athletes and understand their expectations led to the eventual defiance of her requests. Luhmann’s (1995) work stressed that limited social competency and ability to communicate with participants can reduce the influence an individual has on the social environment. As a result, Purdy and colleagues suggested coaches require a ‘social component’ to their work. In the case of the elite rowers, they were left so dissatisfied with the coach, that they fought to increase their own power through engaging in acts of defiance. Their subsequent actions forced the coach out of her job (Purdy et al., 2008). The findings built upon research highlighting the complexity of power and interactions inherent within the coach-athlete relationship; in particular, how coaches must carefully consider and evaluate the coaching environment, including athletes’ expectations (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2005; Purdy et al., 2009).

More recently, Toner et al., (2012) used a personal narrative to explore the principal author’s experiences of his golf coach. Here, through developing reflective and reflexive interactions with the co-authors, Toner et al. (2012) demonstrated how the author’s perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship shifted from being a ‘blameless victim’ to
challenge the original account. In doing so, Toner questioned his ‘rigid’ and ‘comfortable’ interpretation of actions and roles within the story. The resulting account stretched beyond illuminating the intricacies within the coach-athlete relationship, to provide a detailed example of how narrative can be used as a tool for understanding and uncovering events. Thus, an appreciation was given to the role co-authors (‘critical friends’) had regarding shaping the story. Here, the authors recognised a different set of colleagues may have forged a far different story (Toner et al., 2012). Nevertheless, Toner’s re-evaluation of his story provided an innovative strand of research that can further develop an understanding of coaching.

2.2.4 Context and coach interaction

Coaches and athletes are mutually interdependent, meaning one cannot function without the other. The resulting interactions between both parties are marked by cultural norms, values and practices (Ronglan, 2011). In this way, ‘sport’ cannot be considered as a homogeneous culture. Rather, an intricate relationship exists between sporting contexts and the construction of practice by coaches and athletes. Practices and discourses featured in specific sports constitute what may be known as ‘sub-cultures’, which consist of various identities and associated behaviours. For example, Skille (2007) analysed the differences between two varying football cultures; a ‘traditional’ football club and an ‘alternative’ non-competitive public initiative. Unsurprisingly, the findings established that the two contexts attracted different participants, producing different experiences and opportunities. Drawing principally upon interview data, Skille (2007) identified differences in the overall field (i.e., sport), the sub-fields (e.g., football) and between the sub-fields (e.g., traditional/alternative). Through a Bourdieusian lens, specifically the notion of ‘field’, Skille (2007) provided a more nuanced
appreciation of difference between coaching contexts which contribute to understanding the overall complexity of the activity.

The influence context may have upon the coaching process has been addressed in previous research. For example, the judo coaches of d’Arripe-Longueville, Fournier and Dubois (1998) adopted an aggressive authoritarian approach in order to meet the behaviours and expectations of the athletes. The actions of the coaches were legitimised as an accepted part of the elite judo culture. Similarly, Cushion and Jones (2006) highlighted the coaching culture of a youth soccer academy (Albion Football Club). The authoritarian discourse, incorporating abusive language, provided an example of how coaching practice was unquestionably informed by the culture and beliefs of their working climate. Such actions were consequently excused as ‘tradition’ (Cushion & Jones, 2006, p.148). More recently, Cushion and Jones (2014) revisited their understanding of Albion F.C. Here, the authors used Bourdieu’s work to explore ‘socialisation’, ‘symbolic violence’ and the ‘hidden curriculums’ within the Club. The findings explicitly illustrated the taken-for-granted expectations unquestionably internalised by both coaches and athletes. The implications of Cushion and Jones (2014) highlighted that culture within football clubs and youth academies are as responsible for learning as the coaches themselves. Reproduced practices and internalised beliefs were accepted throughout, labelled as “the way things were” (Cushion & Jones, 2014, p.19). As such, through highlighting the “everything that goes without saying” (Bourdieu, 1993, p.51) aspects of coaching, the paper highlighted the challenges academics, coaches and athletes face when trying to dislodge constraining discourses in order to reconstruct better forms of coaching (Cushion & Jones, 2014).

Coaching research concerning context has not been confined just to soccer and judo, a body of literature exists illuminating the varying characteristics and cultures bound to different sports. For example, Jones et al. (2005) clarified the discourse and interactions in
swimming were bound to producing a ‘swimming body’. Additionally, from a rowing perspective, Purdy’s ethnographic work examined the interactions between coach and athlete in context. More specifically, Purdy and Jones (2011) highlighted a conflicting set of beliefs and interactions as a result of Purdy’s dual role as a coxswain and researcher. Here, as a participant researcher, she gained precious access to the coaches and athletes allowing for a greater “sense of integration” (Purdy & Jones, 2011, p.335). In turn, she drew upon the work of Anthony Giddens to illustrate the importance of ‘stocks of knowledge’ and how athletes and coaches draw upon these stocks to make assumptions of whether a coach is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Results illustrated how a constant negative tone and failure to adhere to the ‘coaching contract’ left the athletes dissatisfied and even meant one member of the team confronted the coaches’ actions (Purdy & Jones, 2011, p.342). The paper’s value highlighted the need for coaches to respect cultural rules, but also to “read the contextual landscape based on its nuanced happenings” (Purdy & Jones, 2011, p.343). The significance here builds upon the recognition for coaches to be continuously flexible within their practices (Jones et al., 2004).

When attempting to understand the intricate interplay between context, coaches and athletes, Ronglan (2011) suggested that research has underappreciated the importance of interactions between athletes. A study conducted by Holt, Black, Tamminen, Fox and Mandigo (2008) assessed youth female soccer players’ perceptions of their peers’ experiences. Data were collected through interviews, and the results were divided into three sections concerning social complexity; i.e., interactions, relationships and group processes. The findings illustrated that participants perceived leaders within the group to be significant, with one participant describing a good leader as someone who “helps you with your mistakes and showing you what you’re doing right” (Holt et al., 2008, p.424). Whilst yielding some interesting athlete perceptions, the study was primarily psychological in nature and can be criticised for simplifying the dynamics of interaction into categorisations.
The respective sociological approach to coaching research has been limited by not exploring the interactions between athletes. In this regard, Ronglan (2011) identified that athletes are not only expected to collaborate for good results but to compete for position, creating ‘doubleness’ of partners and rivals (Ronglan, 2011). In a previous study with the Norwegian international handball team, Ronglan (2010) recognised that such ‘doubleness’ within a squad was classed as a positive. This sentiment resonates with the findings from Holt et al.’s (2008). Here, Holt and colleagues emphasised the importance of role and hierarchy within a group when integrating new players. Like Potrac and Jones (2009b), other (e.g., veteran) players are of particular importance for coaches when attempting to implement a specific agenda. In this regard, although athlete interaction has been alluded to, there remains a paucity of research focusing on athlete involvement and interplay with context.

2.2.5 Micropolitics and coaching

Coach and athlete are complementary and both require a sensitive appreciation of each other in order to produce appropriate face-to-face interactions (Purdy et al., 2008). The previous section has highlighted the importance of interaction within the coaching process. For Mead (1934), social interaction is dependent upon each party’s ability to position themselves in the place of the others, regulating and adjusting their behaviour accordingly. Thus, coaches are not bound solely to interactions with athletes, but may have regular interaction with other significant individuals such as assistant coaches, administrators and parents (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Ronglan, 2010). In their study of team sport coaches, Lemyre, Trudel and Durand-Bush (2007) recognised the importance of assistant coaches as a valuable source of knowledge. In particular, one coach stated “the three of us make most of the decisions together” (p.199).
However, whilst a frictionless collaboration was depicted by Lemyre et al. (2007), a contrasting body of work exists (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac et al., 2012) that has painted the activity as a more contested arena for struggle. Despite Lemyre et al. (2007) working with recreational coaches, the data highlighted a lack of interaction between rival coaches. This is perhaps unsurprising given the competitive nature of sport. Thus, Potrac and Jones (2009a) drew upon the educational concept of micropolitics as a new area of interest for coaching. Here, a variety of literature (e.g., Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Blase & Blase, 2002) was selected to describe micropolitics as the “political interactions that take place between social actors in different organisational settings, such as schools, sports clubs and sports teams, companies and families” (Potrac and Jones, 2009a, p.225).

Micropolitics was offered as a framework which provides a further nuanced appreciation of and for coaches’ work, helping to understand the manipulative work often involved (d’Arrippe-Longueville et al., 1998; Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2004). In doing so, the notion was made explicit which has featured implicitly within previous observational studies (e.g., d’Arrippe-Longueville et al., 1998; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). Having introduced the concept, Potrac and Jones (2009b) utilised the framework to explore the micropolitical strategies used by Gavin (a pseudonym), the head soccer coach at Erewhon City F.C. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and illustrated the strategies employed to get athletes to ‘buy into’ the coaching programme. Here, Potrac and Jones (2009b) revealed how careful consideration allowed Gavin to manipulate the situation at the club to gain the control, trust and respect of the players. For example, as a new head coach, Gavin recognised the assistants he inherited as a potential threat to his power. As a result, Gavin spent the first couple of weeks at the club in the background observing the training culture. Gavin carefully surveyed the club before slowly integrating himself into the setup. His work began with small groups which allowed for him to ‘sell himself’ with in-
depth knowledge, videos and booklets. In doing so, Gavin’s actions undermined the competence of the existing assistant coach and, therefore, reduced the players’ perceptions of the assistant. The purpose was to ultimately reduce the power of the assistant within the club.

In addition, Gavin demonstrated a political awareness for the power players have. He suggested players can “moan about you, or complain to the chairman” (Potrac & Jones, 2009b, p.568). For example, Gavin recalled an incident when a player began to cause friction through criticising his methods. Here, Gavin engineered sessions around the individual to highlight the player’s weaknesses. The resultant manipulation forced the individual out the set-up. Consequently, the study not only depicted semi-professional football as a contested arena, but also highlighted the political literacy of coaches to manage and manipulate situations when implementing an agenda (Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b). The subsequent micropolitical agenda within coaching supports previous findings concerning the presentation of appropriate ‘fronts’ (Potrac et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2004).

Developing a micropolitical understanding of coaching, Potrac et al. (2012) provided an auto-ethnographic account of the principal author’s experiences of coaching. Here, Potrac et al. (2012) further explored the competitive, uncaring and manipulative interactions between coaching staff. The account examined how coaches undermined each other for personal gain. For example, Potrac et al. (2012) recalled an incident where a senior coach interrupted a session, despite previously approving the plan, to undermine the points made. In turn, the original coach was left embarrassed and degraded in front of the athletes and fellow coaches (Potrac et al., 2012). The actions of the coach resembled that of Gavin in Potrac and Jones (2009b); that is, a senior coach stripping the power of an assistant to push a personal agenda. To deconstruct the story, Potrac and colleagues drew upon Bauman’s theory of ‘liquid modernity’. Buaman’s work added depth to the auto-ethnographic work through appreciating the insecurity, uncertainty and individualisation evident in a constantly changing
social world. In doing so, the work builds upon literature depicting coaching as an arena for struggle (Ball, 1987, p.19), whilst highlighting the fallacy of collaboration within football’s competitive coaching climate.

Relatedly, the story served as a sensitive tool for understanding and further outlining the multifaceted nature of coaching (Toner et al., 2012). In the case of Potrac et al. (2012), the coach’s discontent with the political struggle led him to quit his position and ‘call time’ on his coaching career. Thus, the paper adds to our understanding of micropolitics within practice (between coaches and athletes), but also alludes to the often overlooked emotional tensions within coaching (Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2012).

2.3 Coach education

Research thus far has demonstrated coaches as highly influential regarding the shaping, creating and development of athletes’ sport experiences. In turn, coach education has been recognised as a critical component in the delivery of such experience (Piggott, 2012, 2013; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). This Review will now turn to a brief discussion addressing some significant UK government initiatives and policies that have contributed to educating coaches followed by an examination of the literature surrounding coach education. The purpose is to further deconstruct the research within sport coaching permeated by critical sociology. In doing so, there will be a consideration of research offering alternative methods to develop coach learning and, therefore, help to further situate this study.

UK Sport (the UK Government’s organisation accountable for directing the development of sport in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) has attempted to transform coach education in the UK. In ‘Vision for Coaching’, UK Sport endorsed the need to professionalise coaching and elevate the standard of coaching to those of “a profession acknowledged as central to the development of sport and the fulfilment of individual
potential” (UK Sport, 2001, p.5). With that in mind, the Government’s ‘Plan for Sport’ created a Coaching Task Force (CTF). The CTF was granted £28 million in order to build on initiatives, evaluate the shortages of both professional and volunteer coaches, whilst developing and implementing the UK coaching certificate (UKCC); a national coaching certificate (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2002). The objective of the UKCC was to revitalise coach education, forming part of a more strategic effort to tackle the aforementioned problem to professionalise sports coaching (Lyle, 2007a). In doing so, UKCC assessed award programmes and their supporting structures against a set of standardised UK-wide criteria.

In developing coach education, UK Sport (2001) recognised the necessity to develop coaching as a profession which would last. This was supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2002) who concluded that developing the quality of coaching would ultimately assist in raising the standards of sporting performance. Consequently, UK Sport provided an Elite Programme designed to promote coaching across the entire coach pathway consisting of initiatives such as Elite Coach and an Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme (ECAP). More specifically, ECAP, launched in January 2010, was designed to support and develop emerging high performance coaches. The design followed a traditional apprenticeship model through the use of a master coach as a mentor. The ambition here was to formalise mentoring within a structure, as opposed to occurring on a more informal basis (UK Sports, 2014).

Piggott (2013) described the initiatives discussed above as a neo-liberal modernisation agenda to place coaches at the heart of sporting cultures and ultimately, increase, redefine and value coaching as a highly skilled and educated profession. To date, the academic attention towards coach education has concerned preparing coaches through educational structures (e.g., Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones, 2010; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Nelson, Cushion &
According to Piggott (2013), three fundamental assertions can be drawn from this body of literature: (1) coach education has been synonymously used with formal education; (2) coach education is a sub-category of coach learning and; (3) coach learning is a sub-category of coach development. In this light, it has been recognised that coaches learn through a variety of experiences. Nelson et al. (2006) suggested these experiences can be categorised as being formal, non-formal and informal. Formal learning has been defined as taking place in an “institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8). Coach education programmes resemble these formal situations, occurring only in short blocks at a time with significant months or years in between (Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie & Neville, 2001).

In addition, Cushion and colleagues have suggested a sliding scale of effectiveness captures formal learning on these courses ranging from genuine ‘education’ to ‘indoctrination’ (Cushion, Nelson, Armour, Lyle, Jones, Sandford & O’Callaghan, 2010). The latter is perhaps less surprising, for as Nelson et al. (2006) suggested, National governing bodies (NGB’s) hold some flawed assumptions about coaches’ and coaching which position the courses within the less effective category (Piggott, 2012). Previous research indicated that formal education courses are falling short in meeting the needs of the attending coaches (e.g., Erickson, Bruner, MacDonald & Côté, 2008).

From this perspective, a growing body of scholars have turned their attention to coach education courses (e.g., Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Cassidy et al., 2006; Lyle, 2007a; Culver & Trudel, 2008; Cushion et al., 2010; Piggott, 2012). Despite this growing body of work surrounding coach education, Cushion and colleagues’ systematic review suggested a paucity of research exists specifically investigating and evaluating formal coach education (Cushion et al., 2010). In this respect, few studies have directly examined the effectiveness of coach education in relation to coaching competency despite many coach education courses being
largely competency based. Thus, Cushion et al. (2010) identified that no evidence has been presented to directly link coach education certification to coaching competency, and so, the competencies achieved by coaches are not directly linked to the courses on offer.

More recently, Piggott (2012) built upon this work through adopting a sociological standpoint. Drawing upon neo-Foucauldian concepts, Piggott (2012) interviewed 12 coaches concerning their experiences’ of formal coach education courses. The results provided four ‘rationalities’ that coincided with previously cited criticisms. The most notable of these, termed ‘rite of passage’, concerned the belief that coaches secure knowledge and prestige as they progressed through each ‘level’ of coach education. However, Wright, Trudel and Culver (2007) previously identified that, rather than following such frictionless progression, coaches attach a level of compulsion to the courses, discrediting the aforementioned assumption. Similar results were found by Chesterfield et al. (2010), who concluded that coaches manipulate their behaviours, through the use of ‘studentship’ (Graber, 1991) and ‘impression management’ (Goffman, 1959), in order to attain the approval of examiners and gain certification. The participants within Chesterfield et al.’s (2010) study reported that material provided on such courses was not applicable, and thus, ‘divorced from reality’ (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This is a notion reaffirmed by Piggott (2012) in the form of ‘sacred texts’; that is, coaches were given ‘a manual’ to follow which echoed the ‘gold standard’ of coaching. As a result, Piggott’s (2012) work, like that of Denison (2007), revealed a level of ‘docility’ within the examined coach education courses that suggested an explanation for why coaches willingly accepted this coaching orientation (Cushion et al., 2003).

Despite such criticisms, to tarnish all the participants as docile would be an injustice to the courses, with coaches often reporting particular elements as useful (e.g., Jones & Allison, 2014). Indeed, as Piggott (2012) identified, some smaller NGBs have been able to provide more coach interaction through task orientation and, consequently, the courses have
been deemed more useful by attendees. For example, McCullick, Belcher and Schemp (2005) investigated the perceptions of 30 participants (25 course candidates and five coach educators) on a LPGA course. Findings illustrated that coaches enjoyed the progressions and found the presence of knowledgeable others useful and important for their development. In a different light, Jones and Allison (2014) explored the development and experiences of candidates on an elite professional preparation programme. Here, the authors identified that periodic course gatherings provided a ‘community of security’ for participants. The identified value of the course was, therefore, not to develop competency, but rather, to support coaches from their everyday workplace anxiety. The study highlighted a desire for more peer-based learning opportunities to further capture some of the complexities of their task (Jones & Allison, 2014).

As previously established, the UKCC was designed to tackle issues associated with formalised coach education. However, while practical changes transpire within coach education (e.g., mentoring within elite coach), Cushion et al. (2010) suggested that a gap emerged between the expressions of the UKCC and representations of what actually occurs in practice. Such concerns echo the work of Harvey et al. (2013), who observed an ‘epistemological gap’ (Partington & Cushion, 2013) between coaches’ knowledge, action and explanations. Here, the authors identified a lack of reflection as a key downfall for coaches, which emphasised the low impact of coach education. This was a sentiment supported by Norman (2008), who, following interviews with six national coaches, suggested that national governing bodies were failing to improve current professional preparation programmes. As a consequence, it has been reported that coaches were not gaining their knowledge from coach education but through their understanding of previous experience (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Cushion et al., 2003). In this respect, according to Nelson and Cushion (2006), coach education courses that occurred in short blocks, over an extended period of time, lacked
opportunity to facilitate and integrate new knowledge into practices. The sentiment echoes Cassidy et al. (2006), who asserted that coaches are not ‘vessels’ to simply be filled with knowledge provided on the current courses. However, for Cushion (2013), coach education has remained standardised and the technocratic approaches offered are largely unchanged. Thus, the ensuing literature has gone some way to suggest a lack of social criticality within coach education and coach education research (Chesterfield et al., 2010; Piggott, 2012, 2015; Townsend & Cushion, 2015). As a result, the argument has been made for the inclusion of a critical sociological perspective to add theoretical depth to our current teaching.

In an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding, Nelson and Cushion (2006) advocated reflection as an analytical framework within coach education. The rationale here was to address and redefine the assortment of atheoretical models used by many governing bodies to certify coaches (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2004). The data collected (through interviews, observations and documentation review) illustrated that, in spite of the potential to facilitate reflection, current coach education courses remain decontextualized and unlikely to promote reflective practitioners (Nelson & Cushion, 2006).

In this respect, Culver and Trudel (2008) offered a potential avenue forward. Here, the scholars suggested communities of practice (CoPs) as a perspective to harness the multifaceted social interaction within a community for learning. CoPs can be defined as “people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p.4). Wenger et al. (2002) appreciated CoPs are full of contestation and conflict, resembling the tensions of social interaction within a team. Thus, although competitive coaches are unlikely to engage in frictionless collaboration (Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Jones & Allison, 2014), CoPs have been suggested as holding the potential to promote non-formal learning in coaches (Culver & Trudel, 2008). However, despite such
claims for the use of CoP and its potential contribution to coach education, Piggott (2013) suggested some misconceptions exist around the theory. These concerns centred on CoPs original purpose of *description*, to understand learning in a community, as opposed to a *prescriptive* model for coach education (Piggott, 2013).

In an attempt to address many of the critiques of coach education, Leduc, Culver and Werthner (2012) examined coach learning on a formal coach education programme that was grounded in a constructivist approach. Data were collected through both observations and interviews. The findings illustrated the variation among participants. On one hand, some participants were able to engage comfortably, changing cognitive, emotive and practical ability, considered as deep learning. On the other hand, some participants were not able to engage at this level of learning and change, citing a lack of confidence and time as explanations. The authors used Jarvis (2006, 2007, 2009) and Moon’s (2001) theoretical frameworks to express the difficulties involved in providing an impactful coach education course. However, such difficulties are perhaps unsurprising when considering the work of Townsend and Cushion (2015). Here, drawing upon Bourdieu’s notions of field, habitus and capital, Townsend and Cushion (2015) interrogated the haphazard culture of elite cricket coach education. In doing so, data were collected through semi-structured interviews to illustrate a tension between the highly individualised legitimised knowledge and the prescribed body of knowledge provided in cricket coach education. The scholars identified a gap in our understanding of the power-ridden, socially-political and constructed reality of coach education (Townsend & Cushion, 2015). As a result, the study called for a more sophisticated understanding of coach education in order to inform coach educators and practitioners.
2.4 The ‘complexity of coaching’ debate

The broad range of literature within coaching science has adopted various, and at times, conflicting epistemological assumptions in an attempt to understand the activity. A subsequent debate has ignited concerning the ‘complexity of coaching’. The purpose of this section is to identify and evaluate the literature related to this debate. The argument is presented from two principal locations with alternative epistemologies.

An increasing body of literature within the discipline has accepted that coaching is inherently complex (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Bowes & Jones, 2006; Abraham & Collins, 2011). However, the use and understanding of ‘complexity’ has become a point of debate. For example, a commentary provided by Lyle (2007b) critiqued Cushion (2007), among others, for ‘over-egging’ the complexity within coaching. These criticisms echo broader approaches within coaching research that have criticised coaching scholars for depicting an ‘unmanageable complexity’ (e.g., North, 2013). In its place, the intention has been to deliver structure to the coaching process through providing models and conceptual ideas (Lyle, 2007b).

More recently, this argument was made by Abraham and Collins (2011), who suggested the use of models as a way of providing structure to cope with complexity. The argument for the use of models has been a constant feature of coaching research (e.g., Fairs, 1987; Sherman et al., 1997; Lyle 2002; Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006). These models have taken the form of either first person (through the coaches’ eyes) or third person (directly related to coaches’ practice) accounts and have drawn upon social psychological concepts to claim a more ‘holistic’ representation of coaching. For example, Abraham et al. (2006) drew upon the thinking of Anderson (1982/87) to provide a ‘schematic’. Here, the idea was to capture the ‘bigger picture’ of coaching, addressing decision making as being at the heart of the process. Consequently, the authors positioned coaches as drawing upon specific
categories of knowledge (e.g., sports sciences, practice activities, planning and preparation). Similarly, Poczwardowski, Barott and Henschen (2002) emphasised the importance of care within the dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship, while others (e.g., Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003) have stressed the importance of ‘closeness’ within their models of the coach-athlete dyad. Here, the attempt was to capture the interpersonal meanings behind coach-athlete interactions.

Building upon the premise that coaching is systematic, Abraham and Collins (2011) attempted to break down the ‘complexity’ of coaching into practical suggestions. In this way, the argument recommended an appreciation of definitive processes and structure is required alongside a need for ‘practice skills’, ‘pointers’ and ‘tools’ to aid coaches (Abraham & Collins, 2011; North, 2013). The model proposed here, termed ‘nesting thinking’, was offered by the Abraham and Collins (2011) to help better educate practitioners through a process of Professional Judgment and Decision Making (PJDM). Centred on coaching as a decision-making endeavour, the model was designed to build upon their earlier attempts (Abraham, Collins & Martindale, 2006). After reviewing the two main schools of thought (Classical and Naturalistic decision making), the intention was to create a ‘unifying focus’ in order to ‘cull’ different perspectives. The proposition was for the ‘nested model’ to serve as a platform to guide practitioners, coach educators and future research (Abraham & Collins, 2011). The scholars claimed that coaches could use the ‘nested model’ to inform their planning and decision making at different levels (micro, meso and macro), encompassing pedagogical, social and political factors. However, in spite of efforts to capture key facets of coaching, the model is no more than an extension of what already exists. Thus, the criticisms echo those of previously established modelling; that is, a modelling approach is simplistic and rationalistic (Jones & Wallace, 2005). As such, despite claiming a better appreciation for the subtleties of coaching and the wider social context through adopting qualitative methods,
the models mentioned above are generalised and often used to make decontextualized assumptions. The simplicity of the psychological scientism associated with these studies is the result of the methodology employed failing to capture the complexities and detail of coaches’ practice (North, 2013).

In opposition to this rationalistic position, Jones and colleagues have turned to sociology to capture the multi-faceted and socially dynamic activity. Despite the ostensible virtue in ‘practical suggestions’, the preoccupation with causality within coaching has led to simplistic and decontextualized ideas (Jones & Ronglan, 2016). Whilst Jowett and others utter an acceptance for complexity, their growing number of empirical work highlights the simplicity underpinning their argument (e.g., Abraham & Collins, 2011). In this respect, coaching scholars have turned to, what Byrne (2005) suggested as, a shift in focus from causes towards effects. The argument is akin to Law’s (2006) contention that, any attempt to make the world clean and neat results in a failure to appreciate the messy nature of life and, consequently, represses any chance of understanding reality. This is particularly apparent when considering the impossibility of tracking the multitude of interactional processes evident in coaching (Jones & Ronglan, 2016). However, this argument is not to say coaching is ‘unmanageable’. Rather, turning to Jones and Wallace (2006), the metaphor of ‘orchestration’ has been offered as a tangible conception for dealing with the said complexity. Thus, the coach as orchestrator strives to “organise and oversee an intricate array of interrelated tasks as changes unfold” (Jones & Wallace, 2005, p.128). The purpose here was to (re)direct attention towards understanding processes, attending to their detail, as opposed to prescribing how to get there (Jones & Ronglan, 2016). The idea is for unobtrusive coaching; that is, using what can be described as ‘soft control’ to direct athletes to learn through experiences whilst focusing on the exercise and its objectives. The notion resonated
with Ian McGeechan’s analogy of ‘roots and wings’; the roots representing set structure whilst the wings allow for athletes to improvise (Jones et al., 2004).

More recently, Jones, Bailey and Thompson (2013) built upon the concept of orchestration to include the pedagogical notion of ‘noticing’ (Mason, 2002). John Mason’s premise was that a pedagogue must notice what to act upon. In this way, noticing occurs all the time, often unconsciously. Therefore, improved attention to the intuition of a pedagogue can become a powerful developmental tool (Jones et al., 2013). It was subsequently argued that noticing was a precursor for orchestration. In this regard, Santos, Jones and Mesquita (2013) added empirical weight to the notion of orchestration through conducting semi-structured interviews with five elite Portuguese coaches. Findings demonstrated the importance of power, social obligation and flexible scaffolding within the coaching context.

From this perspective, what is needed for a coach to achieve desired ends is not ‘unmanageable’, but dependent upon the relational interactions that influence the process (Jones & Ronglan, 2016). In rendering practical suggestions too concrete for application, Jones, Edwards and Viotto Filho (2016) advocated Puddifoot’s (2000) critique of what constitutes a ‘social process’ to develop and produce insightful conceptualisations through an intricate appreciation of ‘process’. Here, Jones et al. (2016) proposed structure within coaching as a necessity and offered Leont’ev’s (1978) Activity Theory as a lens to better conceptualise it. The purpose was to clarify earlier work rather than explore totally “new areas of investigation” (p.4). Through using Activity Theory as a framework, the authors recognised that coaching knowledge develops from intimate familiarities with contextualised settings. Thus, they proposed Activity Theory as a framework that can support an interpretive agenda through accommodating seemingly separate notions such as ‘object’, ‘subject’ and ‘division of labour’, whilst not disregarding the possibility of an agreed target goal. Having said that, the readers of this paper were advised to “learn what can only be implied and never
direct advice” (Flyvberg, Landman & Schram, 2012, p.4). This notion is congruent throughout much of Jones and colleagues work, helping to provide practical accounts, grounded in theory and epistemic reality.

2.5 Garfinkel and ethnomethodology

Garfinkel did not coin the term ethnomethodology until working on a jury project with Fred Strodbeck and Saul Mendlovitz in 1954. The manifestation of ‘ethnomethodology’ occurred through combining the ‘ethnos’ (meaning people), which Garfinkel saw in existing human relations (e.g., ethnoscience, ethnobotany), with an extrapolated definition of methodology cited from the philosopher Felix Kauffman; that is, “the theory of correct decisions in deciding the grounds of action and further inference” (Rawls, 2002, p.5). And so, “ethnomethodology” was born, making the recommendation that “activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organised everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘accountable’” (Garfinkel, 1984, p.1). In doing so, ethnomethodology is concerned with how members achieve meaningful social order through investigating the unspoken rules and shared methods that are practiced within society (Liberman, 2013). Although the term ethnomethodology did not come to the forefront until the release of ‘Studies in ethnomethodology’ (Garfinkel, 1967), Garfinkel’s writings have always attended to central conceptual issues within sociology; including, the theory of social action, intersubjectivity and the social constitution of knowledge (Heritage, 1987). In this way, Watson (2009) noted that key notions underpinning Garfinkel’s work were prominent within his early writing (e.g., Garfinkel, 1949, 1959, 1963). Whilst these are not Garfinkel’s most popular writings, Linstead (2006) proposed that the notions provided here have been an unacknowledged influence on many writers and thinkers. In this regard, Lemert
(2004) recognised that Garfinkel’s writings have had a significant influence on sociology itself.

A variety of different thinkers and their accompanying work have contributed to the outcome of ethnomethodology. Principal among these was Garfinkel’s doctoral supervisor Talcott Parsons. Talcott Parsons was responsible for the “Parsonian structural-functional paradigm” (Heritage, 1987, p.224), which dominated sociological theory for the two decades following the Second World War. Fundamentally, Parsons’ work was a theory of the motivations of action. Parsons advocated the creation of normative models to explain, legitimise and regulate the production of social facts. According to Parsons, the regularity of life is internalised and governs our ability to conform to the rules of life. However, despite being supervised by Parsons, this conception of social order left Garfinkel dissatisfied. Garfinkel later stated that in “most available theories of social action and social structure rational actions are assigned residual status” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.263). Hence he advocated that the relationship between actor and situation were not stable but built upon contingent cultural contents and rules. Thus, moving away from a normative (positivistic) paradigm, Garfinkel suggested that the interactional procedures between actor and situation are constructed by interpretation and, therefore, developed a shift to an interpretive (constructivist) paradigm (Coulon, 1995).

The subsequent attention to rational actions (e.g., routine grounds of everyday action) represented a move away from Parsons’ normative paradigm. Whilst similarities in language and discourse can be made between Garfinkel’s writing and Parsons, ethnomethodology marked an attempt to remedy the sociological work that rendered social order invisible (Rawls, 2006, p.3). In doing so, Garfinkel turned to the emerging phenomenological work of Alfred Schutz’s writings. In the preface to ‘Studies in ethnomethodology’, Garfinkel explicitly documented the phenomenological influences of Aaron Gurwitsch and Edmund
Husserl. He considered the writings of phenomenologists such as Shütz and Grawitsch as a “serious attempt to treat the details of social phenomena as essential to meaning, order, coherence, and understanding” (Rawls, 2006, p.3). In addition, ‘Heideggerian’ notions have also been linked to Garfinkel’s work (McHoul, 1998). In this way, Garfinkel (e.g., Garfinkel, 1949) drew heavily upon Parsonian and phenomenological terminology, but Garfinkel’s position illustrated a different set of meanings and understandings (Rawls, 2006).

Ethnomethodology’s subsequent attention to social order insisted that coherent interactions are reliant, and produced in and through, complex, mutually recognizable social work; seen but unnoticed rules. However, such rules were not concrete for Garfinkel. Rather, ethnomethodology was concerned with indexical (context specific) expressions and practical actions as “contingent on-going accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.11). In this regard, Garfinkel’s attention placed practical organisation of actions at centre stage, allowing individuals to make sense of each other’s interactions. Ethnomethodology then is not a method with a corresponding set of research instructions. Rather, the objective is to “discover what persons in particular situations do, the methods they use, to create patterned social life” (Rawls, 2002, p.6). Despite earlier publications (e.g., Garfinkel, 1949, 1959), it was ‘Studies in ethnomethodology’ (Garfinkel, 1967) which penetrated social sciences with this objective, sparking interest at a time of highly-charged theoretical dispute. Within ‘Studies’, Garfinkel (1967) assembled several essays, some of which had been published before, to produce and discuss a range of diverse substantive topics through his ethnomethodological lens. The discussions ranged from the deliberations of jurors, the selection process for patients at a psychiatric clinic and the behaviours of a person seeking a sex-change.

At the heart of Garfinkel’s publication was a critique of the Parsonian plenum. This corpus of work took over thirty years to surface in contemporary discussions of social theory
(Heritage, 1987). His complex writing style, consisting of large discursive sentences for description, made the work somewhat hard to place. Although ‘Studies in ethnomethodology’ provided a range of extraordinary, quasi-natural experiments, his writings have been critiqued for lacking a distinct systematic theory to connect the studies or themes (Heritage, 1984). Perhaps Lemert (2007) would suggest Garfinkel’s writing style is unsurprising given that social life is “seldom as settled as one would like, and rarely summarized in a formula or law as are the theories of many sciences” (p.56). For Garfinkel then, conceptualising social interaction could not be adequately specified through abstraction. Thus, rather than create a theoretical attitude or introduce a particular cognitive knowledge, Garfinkel attempted to overcome the limitations of text through encouraging readers to embody the actions and practices discussed (Rawls, 2006). In this respect, Rawls advocated Garfinkel’s writings should not be ‘merely read’. In its place, the reader is encouraged to ‘embodiedly do’ the text; that is, the practical work examined, what’s said, heard, felt – the recognisable (Rawls, 2006).

Ethnomethodology has bombarded sociology for its generation of ‘knowledge’ of activities. For sociology, the aim is to explain activity in terms of cause, reason and determinants. However, the interest for ethnomethodology lies in the social structures of generating, and what can be explained is the sense (essence) of the activity (Heap, 1980). However, Garfinkel’s position was not widely accepted at first. Lewis Coser, then president of the American Sociological Association, accused ethnomethodology of being a sect, led by a charismatic leader in Garfinkel (Coser, 1974). Discomfort with ethnomethodology’s esoteric language sparked debate among the sociological community at the time. Specifically, Coser (1975) attacked ethnomethodology, labelling the work as ‘peculiar’, ‘particularistic’ and ‘trivial’. However, the argument here replicated the larger theoretical turbulence that had formed within sociology; over the very wholeness of the world (Lemert, 2004). Thus, even
Coser’s (1975) attack recognised ethnomethodology’s position in rejecting an objective study and understanding of society and history.

One year later, Zimmerman (1976) responded to illustrate ethnomethodology’s concerns aligned with sociology but with a different perspective; one that did not reduce social reality to statistical measurement. The response judged Coser of misunderstanding ethnomethodology’s main tenets. In doing so, Zimmerman confirmed ethnomethodology as investigating:

“…members’ accounts of the social world as situated accomplishments, not as informants; an inside view of what is ‘really happening’. Ethnomethodology’s concern, in general, is the elucidation of how accounts or descriptions of an event, a relationship, or a thing are produced in interaction in such a way that they achieve some situated methodological status e.g., as factual or fanciful, objective or subjective, etc.” (Zimmerman, 1976, p.10)

Coser’s (1975) misconceived attack on ethnomethodology was, therefore, unearthed from a certain sociological perspective, born from triumphant positivism, which drew heavily upon the methods of natural sciences (Coulon, 1995). Such a position has been challenged and renewed by an interpretive (constructivist) paradigm and the longevity of ethnomethodology is omnipresent through the large body of work that now exists (e.g., Douglas, 1971; Turner, 1974; Livingston, 2008; Fele, 2008). Several scholars (e.g., Heritage, 1987, 2002; Coulon, 1995; von Lehn, 2013), have helped to preserve and appreciate the ethnomethodological movement that Garfinkel’s work inspired. Heritage (1984) provided the most cited, systematic overview and critique of Garfinkel’s studies. The growing body of work now has a broad range of subfields and application in various disciplines (Maynard & Clayman, 1991). Thus, despite ethnomethodology’s inability to escape criticism from sociological alternatives, who claim ethnomethodology’s scope should aim to stretch further than ‘ethnomethods’, Berard (2002) recognised that ethnomethodologists attempting to engage with
alternative traditions of inquiry are, in fact, engaging and *doing* ethnemethodology, rather than contributing to its *undoing*.

Ethnomethodology, as a bona fide perspective, has contributed to the development of conversation analysis (ten Have, 2004). Conversation analysis emerged as a prominent empirical form of ethnomethodology. Originally, Garfinkel collaboratively developed the basic posture of conversation analysis with Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson. In fact, Heritage (1984, 1987) proposed that conversation analysis is perhaps the most direct analysis of social action. For, as Schegloff (1980) suggested, the investigation of conversation analysts have directed their attention to “actual, particular social actions and organised sequences of them” (p.151). In doing so, Heritage (1987) asserted two major dimensions emerged from conversation analysis; the first dimension from Garfinkel and Sack’s work concerning descriptive accounting (e.g., Garfinkel, 1984, Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970); the second explored the detailed and systematic procedures of turn-taking that were consistent with a basic understanding for and of interaction (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Sacks, 1974). As in other areas of ethnomethodology, both dimensions have drawn upon Garfinkel’s proposal that a common set of methods or procedures inform the production and recognition of coherent interaction and action (Heritage, 1984).

Conversation analysis is now an authentic field of study and has been linked to a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, social psychology and cognitive science (Maynard & Clayman, 1991; Heritage, 1984). However, conversation analysis has diverged from Garfinkel’s original inspiration (Atkinson, 1988). In fact, conversation analysis has been critiqued for restricting the development of ethnomethodology through adopting behaviourist and empiricist approaches which neglect the interpretive origins of ethnomethodology. A subsequent tension developed between the two approaches; that is, conversation analysis treats interaction in sequential orders, whilst ethnomethodology has a
more general interest in mundane reasoning and practical actions (Atkinson, 1988). The relationship between conversation analysis and ethnomethodology is now somewhat ambiguous. Whilst the purpose is not to review and detail all the findings produced from conversation analysis, it is imperative to respect that conversation analysis’ emphasis on language has derived from ethnomethodological inquiry (Heritage, 1984; Maynard & Clayman, 1991; ten Have, 2004).

More recently, several of Garfinkel’s own students have produced memoires and insights into his work (e.g., Burns, 2012; Lynch, 2002, 2012; Ruggerone, 2013). Anne Rawls-Warfield, for example, has been one of the principal contributors here. Her work has attempted to rewrite and organise Garfinkel’s publications to overcome what has been described as a “publication block” (Lynch, 2012, p.166). Moreover, Kenneth Liberman extended Garfinkel’s (1967) publications through presenting an additional series of classroom based studies grounded upon ethnomethodological investigations; ‘More studies in ethnomethodology’ (Liberman, 2013). Like Garfinkel’s (1967) original publication, Liberman was able to ethnomethodologically examine several quasi-natural observations of ostensibly unstructured situations, including coffee tasting, reading sketched maps and negotiating inter-cultural exchanges. In doing so, Liberman (2013) further illustrated the routine experiences of people successfully collaborating to ensure the coherent maintenance of social order.

In an expansion on ethnomethodological research, a diverse range of studies have adopted the perspective (e.g., Wieder, 1974; Livingston, 2008; Liberman, 2013). Further examples of ethnomethodological studies exploring ‘accountable’ actions within a specific context include laboratory work (Garfinkel et al., 1981), doctors’ surgeries (Heath, 1986), among social workers (de Montigny, 2007), and in call centres (Martin, O’Neil, Randall & Rouncefield, 2007). Despite the irregularity in studies, ethnomethodology’s insights have been limited within sporting contexts. For instance, Fele (2008) utilised the conception of
‘phenomenal fields’ to analyse and interpret the way a national football team took to the field. Here, Fele (2008) used photographs to illustrate “how a naturally analysable product comes to be produced” (Lynch, Livingston & Garfinkel, 1983, cited in Fele, 2008, p.319). Meanwhile, Jimmerson and Oware (2006) conducted an ethnomethodological ethnography to study young Black basketball playing males. The findings addressed how social ‘codes’ (i.e., showing respect) were means of understanding gender, race and other identities on court. The ‘codes’ both informed actions, and were made accountable as a result of individuals’ actions. The notion of codes presented by Jimmerson and Oware resonated with Wieder’s (1974) investigation of a ‘halfway house’. Wieder’s (1974) seminal text identified that prison inmates were ‘doing the codes’ to organise their behaviour and interactions. The research highlighted that inmates lived the codes and subsequently informed and justified their deviant behaviour as a result of the codes.

Turning specifically to sports coaching, ethnomethodology’s influence has had limited reach within the field, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Miller & Cronin, 2012; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2015; Jones & Corsby, 2015). More specifically, Miller and Cronin (2012) proposed an ethnomethodological standpoint as having the ability to critique some of the previous rationalistic models featured within the discipline (e.g., Fairs, 1987; Smoll & Smith, 1984; Chelladurai, 1990; Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria & Russel, 1995). In a similar vein, Jones and Corsby (2015) drew upon Garfinkel’s (1967) work examining jurors’ decision making to critique the current cognitive bound conceptions of decision-making in sports coaching. The argument here suggested that decision making for coaches is not drawn from an element of choice, but reflects Garfinkel’s suggestion of what kind of message is accepted by what kind of people. This work not only built upon Miller and Cronin’s (2012) suggestion that Garfinkel’s writings can better understand sports coaching, but proposed that coaches can develop their decision making understanding through expanding and reflecting
upon their current ‘frames of reference’ (Goffman, 1974). Whilst no empirical evidence was provided, both articles suggested that Garfinkel’s writings could be used to facilitate more sensitive empirical accounts of coaching. For example, Thompson et al. (2015) drew upon Gafinkel’s work, in conjunction with Goffman and Kelchterman’s writings, to make sense of Adam’s experiences, a graduate conditioning coach at Hollington F.C. In this example, the authors used Garfinkel’s (1956) writings on degradation ceremonies to explore Adam’s experiences of denouncement as senior staff showed a lack of respect for his role. Consequently, Adam was shunned as an ‘outsider’ in the context. Thus, Garfinkel’s writings hold the potential to help coaches “look beyond the obvious” (Jones et al., 2012, p.7).

The purpose of this Review has been to examine literature relevant to the study. Having discussed key sociological concepts that have informed sport coaching, including power, role and interaction, the study occupies a very specific location within the existing body of knowledge. Specifically, despite the contribution of social theory to the field of sport coaching (e.g., Goffman, Bourdieu, Foucault), Garfinkel’s work has received limited attention. In this respect, Garfinkel’s impressive contribution to sociology, among other disciplines, can further an appreciation of the practical methods coaches’ use to organise their everyday affairs. Here, moving beyond stable laws of social order (Lemert, 2002), Garfinkel’s writings explore and build upon the dynamic structures and processes of coaching (Jones & Ronglan, 2016). In doing so, it can make a considerable contribution to our current theorisation of the activity.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction

Although a vast range of interpretive projects have adopted qualitative inquiry, no gold standard method to carry out qualitative research exists (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The subsequent chapter attempts to make clear the philosophical and methodological commitments that inform this study. In terms of structure, after addressing my ontological and epistemological assumptions and, subsequently those of the study, a consideration of my role as the researcher is provided. Following this, the research design used (ethnomethodological ethnography) to address the study’s aims and objectives is discussed. The chapter continues by evaluating the theoretical framework used (principally that of Harold Garfinkel [1967, 2002, 2006], which developed into ethnomethodology). The concluding sections include a description of the environment where the study was conducted (providing insight into the participants), procedure, how the study may be judged, and an outline of the associated ethical issues.

3.2 Locating the research: Ontological and epistemological assumptions

The qualitative researcher must understand that “the type of glasses you wear affects the world you see” (Tracy, 2013, p.38). In this regard, sports coaching research has been divided by, and subject to, varying epistemological assumptions (see 2.4). Whilst it is not a new notion, philosophy can be used to better understand and inform decisions regarding qualitative research (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Garrett (2013) suggested that understanding the philosophical roots of research can be used to “challenge the boundaries of qualitative research methodology in the context of sport coaching research” (p.10). More specifically, Mallett and Tinning (2014) identified that researchers must be cognizant of their ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning their research projects. In this
regard, the significance of this initial methodological section lies in presenting the philosophical underpinning of the thesis.

Paradigms encapsulate an individual’s relationship to the world and help place an individual within that world (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For Guba (1990), a paradigm is described as a net which contains the researcher’s ontological (nature of reality), epistemological (nature of knowledge) and methodological (the approaches for collecting and analysing data) assumptions. At a basic level, the researcher’s paradigm provides a lens for seeing the world, and represents the beliefs and assumptions of his or her position (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Like any form of belief system, the researcher’s paradigm is the result of their life history; what has been learned and what has been acquired through a process of socialisation (Sparkes, 1992). Sparkes helped to clarify the existence of three main research paradigms (Table 1): positivist, interpretive and critical.

**Table 1:** The basic assumptions underlying the positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms (Sparkes, 1992, p.21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Paragon</th>
<th>Positivist</th>
<th>Interpretive</th>
<th>Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td></td>
<td>External-Realist</td>
<td>Internal- Idealist, Relativist</td>
<td>External- Realist Or Internal- Idealist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Objectivist, Dualist</td>
<td>Subjectivist, Interactive</td>
<td>Subjectivist, Interactive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Nomothetic, Experimental, Manipulative</td>
<td>Ideographic, Hermeneutical, Dialectical</td>
<td>Ideographic, Participative, Transformative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>Prediction and Control (technical)</td>
<td>Understanding and interpretation (Practical)</td>
<td>Emancipation (Criticism and liberation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It has been suggested elsewhere (e.g., Lincoln, Lynman & Guba, 2011; Tracy, 2013) that further paradigms can be considered as an extension to Sparkes’ original table; including, post-positivism (a modified form of positivism) and post-modernism (acknowledging the crisis of representation through highlighting power differences and multiple points of view).

Whilst there are numerous subtleties and nuances between paradigms, the importance is to appreciate that the paradigm adopted helps inform the researcher(s) about what and how to do things. For Bryman (2012) then, the ‘net’ of assumptions and commitments of the researcher cannot become divorced from social research. In this way, the assumptions made concerning ontology and epistemology has implications for the methodology and related choices made during any research (Sparkes, 1992). However, to consider the research question lending itself to a paradigm and driving the method is too simplistic. Rather, a more complicated link exists to personal beliefs, which implicitly or explicitly drive any study (Gill, 2011).

Ontological assumptions concern the nature of reality (Sparkes, 1992; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) - the nature of things we know. In this respect, Gill (2011, p.309) stated that “our questions come from us (the researchers) and are influenced by a host of factors including our training, experiences, and immediate surroundings”. In terms of this study, I have chosen to make my ontology clear so that others can further understand the roots and philosophic underpinning of the project. As mentioned at the beginning, I have been involved in football since I can remember. I grew up around the sport and confided in those around me that all I wished for was to be a ‘pro’ (full-time professional footballer). I spent several years floating between local semi-professional teams, without finding a place I could develop as a player (and individual). Alongside playing, I always maintained a coaching role in some capacity. Thus, when I arrived at university, with no explicit understanding for, and of paradigms, my practice was based on some simplistic overriding principles. I sought definitive answer to issues that materialized in practice. However, during my studies in sport

50
coaching, I became intrigued with challenging and developing my practice. An exposure to various coaching literature helped to realise and develop an outlook towards coaching that better appreciated my experiences (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Jones, 2006, 2009; Potrac et al., 2012). Fetterman (1989) would suggest this research developed a more nuanced understanding of my practice and, subsequently, influenced my work interests as a student.

Although coming to understand this position has been gradual, my journey as an individual (and researcher) loosely resembles the wider journey of coaching that was depicted earlier (Chapter two). Through challenging my initially rigid principles, I came to reconceptualise the frustration and confusion I experienced ubiquitous in the coaching process. In this respect, understanding coaching as a social endeavour helped me move away from seeking simplistic answers and solutions in my practice. Now, like others (e.g., Jones, 2000; Cushion & Jones, 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005, 2006), I believe that coaching is inherently complex and multifaceted, with coaches requiring not only technical and tactical knowledge but a ‘social competency’ to successfully nurture talented athletes. I believe the coaching context is influenced by, and dependent upon, situational, cultural, ideological and ethical pressures. Imperative to a coach’s effectiveness then, is his or her ability to distinguish the everyday commodities and differences unique to their context. Given this, Sparkes (1992) would suggest I have adopted a relativist ontology, arguing that reality is socially constructed by individuals. In this regard, reality is not external to us, ‘out there’ to be explained and easily translated into research reports (or models). Rather, a relativist ontology considers reality to be locally and socially bound to an individual’s interaction with the environment (Tracy, 2013).

Sparkes (1992) recognised that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; that is, the assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and how a person understands and acquires knowledge of the world
(Sparkes, 1992). In keeping with my relativist ontology, I have adopted a subjectivist epistemology. A subjectivist epistemology holds the philosophical belief that knowledge is socially constructed and, therefore, social reality is only accessible through taking meaning from people’s interactions and utterances (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In this regard, Tracy (2013) referred to human activity as a ‘text’ that must be read, deconstructed and analysed. Rather than viewing social activities as a tangible reality to be discovered and measured, the respondents’ subjective interactions are the only ways to access their understanding (Sparkes, 1992).

Given my relativist ontological and subjectivist epistemological assumptions, I would align myself with an interpretive (also known as constructivist) paradigm. Altheide and Johnson (2011) suggested that an interpretive paradigm acknowledges the meanings and actions of participants as individually constructed and interpreted by researchers within the specific environments they study. Thus, an interpretive paradigm aims for an understanding of an individual through interpreting their perceptions (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

Whilst my ontological and epistemological positions have been influenced by my personal experience, history and socialisation (Gill, 2011), the paradigm adopted has also been influenced by embracing an ethnomethodological perspective (I will explore this in greater detail later in the Chapter). In this regard, ethnomethodology contributes to the development of an interpretive paradigm through paying specific attention to how people see, describe and co-construct coherent interactions (Zimmerman & Wieder, 1970; Coulon, 1995).

The term ‘passionate participant’ is often associated with a researcher adopting an interpretive paradigm (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2005). Here, the purpose is to facilitate a multiple-voice reconstruction through an empathetic understanding of experience, context and culture within the environment under study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). However, whilst I, as an interpretivist researcher, aimed to grasp meaning through the subjective actions of
participants (Bryman, 2012), this is not to say that the subjective meanings derived are so unique to the culture under investigation that the findings do not have wider value. Instead, Potrac, Jones and Nelson (2014) claimed that the significance of interpretive work stretches further than the chosen context of engagement. In doing so, the authors’ disputed claims that no form of generalisation can be made from such work.

As an alternative, the value of moderatum (i.e., moderate) generalisations was offered (Williams, 2000; Payne & Williams, 2005). Moderate generalisations are built upon a claim that generalisations are inevitable; that is, understanding generalisation as a “general notion or propositions obtained by inference from a particular case” (Williams, 2000, p.212). In this fashion, Payne and Williams (2005) suggested moderate generalisations are consistently made through sociological work and, consequently, modest and pragmatic generalisations, drawn from personal experience, can illustrate the order that makes everyday interaction possible. Despite this project being placed within the realm of interpretivism, generalisations lie within the cultural consistency of the social world that makes a social world possible; a “shared world of meaning” (Williams, 2000, p.220). Hereafter, although the ethnomethodological ethnographic insights of this study are grounded within local practicalities, the gaze is cast to wider cultures and actions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

3.3 Locating the researcher: Distance, roles and position of the researcher

Following the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research, it is evident that in order to understand the world, we must learn the details from the inside. Charmaz (2004) described the need to ‘enter into’ the phenomenon being studied. Such research, with an emphasis of ‘immersion’ within a culture, has been termed an emic perspective (Sparkes, 1992). In this respect, the term ‘insider’ refers to research undertaken on a community by a fellow member of that community (Dandelion, 1995). An emic perspective then, accepts the many realities of
participants, whilst valuing the dynamic and developmental experiences of the researcher (Fetterman, 1989; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Various sporting examples of research adopting an emic perspective include, bodybuilding (Monaghan, 2001; Shilling & Bunsell, 2009), women’s boxing (Paradis, 2012), and rowing (Purdy et al., 2008; Purdy et al., 2009).

For Sacks (1992), a researcher attempting to understand a context in any way can already be classed as being participatory. In this respect, scholars have classified the relationship and level of involvement researchers may have with participants when undertaking fieldwork. In ethnographic work, this is commonly known as ‘distance’. For example, Sparkes and Smith (2014) cited four different categories along a continuum for researcher involvement; complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, to complete participant. Although there are some differences in terminology (e.g., ‘overt full member’, Bryman, 2012) when categorising distance, consensus exists that the researcher is not neutral and, subsequently, the researcher’s choice of possible roles will influence the fieldwork. This is not to be restrictive. Rather, the researcher may move through different roles depending on circumstances (Alder & Alder, 1987; Bryman, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As demonstrated by Purdy and Jones (2013), awareness of roles can be essential within the collection of data. Here, the lead author adopted varying roles from coxswain to kitchen porter to facilitate rich exchanges and secure immersion into the rowing context.

In terms of this study, I can be placed in the category of ‘complete participant’. I adopted a dual role of researcher and player within a semi-professional football club. The researcher as complete participant makes observations from within their own life, rather than to participate in the lives of others for the purpose of observation (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This decision to research an environment already familiar to me was twofold. Firstly, the decision was influenced by personal circumstances: I am a young aspiring academic with a strong footballing identity influenced by my experience of academy and semi-professional
football. My subsequent position is also littered with financial and social commitments. Thus, the research area was one of relative convenience.

Secondly, from a theoretical perspective, my personal characteristics revealed something about the competencies required to accomplish local order within the environment under study. In this regard, Garfinkel suggested actions are constructed by situated actors, meaning empirical observations must come from ‘members’ who are already accepted as ‘members’ (Eberle, 2012). More commonly, this has been referred to as the researcher achieving ‘unique adequacy’; that is, the individual must be a competent participant in the specialised practices that individuals possess operating within the profession (Rawls, 2002). The justification for adequacy from Garfinkel was simple: members produce and make intelligible the social order of their everyday life and, therefore, members must know the methods to achieve this (Garfinkel, 1974). Consequently, as Holdaway (1982) suggested, I had access to the rituals and practices of the research environment prior to exploring them in light of the project’s aims and objectives. This, according to O’Reilly (2009), meant I was equipped with the linguistic competence to read finer non-verbal communications. In doing so, the purpose is to treat those being researched as the experts. The questions raised then, orient towards the recognisable local order and the taken-for-granted practices of those studied (Rawls, 2008).

3.3.1 Issues of positionality: Reflexivity

The correspondence between the distance of the researcher and his or her subjectivities can be a powerful force when shaping and interpreting research (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). With that in mind, there are several constraints for the ‘inside’ researcher, including; (1) knowing too much, which can inhibit his or her ability to analyse the context; (2) saying too much, which may affect relations with participants; (3) premature saturation of fieldnotes, causing a
lack of motivation; (4) and personal issues regarding conflicting roles when participating and observing (Dandelion, 1995). Such issues would appear serious threats to the research should the context in which the research is written and who the research is written for be neglected (Tracy, 2013). In this regard, Lincoln et al. (2011) suggested reflexivity serves as a tool concerning the quality of qualitative research through critically self-reflecting upon key issues such as social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviours (Finlay & Gough, 2003). Thus, reflexivity (self-awareness) has been offered as a tool to combat such problems (Day, 2012).

Reflexivity, meaning to turn back on or to examine oneself, has been responsible for an upsurge in academic consciousness (Finlay & Gough, 2003; Vannini, Waskul & Gottschalk, 2012). In social science terms, reflexivity has been defined as a “thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and researched” (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p.xi). The importance here, as Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested, is that the researcher (human) is the instrument driving the research project and, therefore, subjectivity is inevitable. Thus, the aim of reflexivity is to help us understand the many selves we bring into the field through addressing distinctive (subjective) voices that may be associated (Reinharz, 1997). The principle behind adopting reflexive thought as a part of qualitative investigation requires replacing what we ‘see’ with ‘what we think we see’ (Day, 2012).

In terms of application, Finlay (2002) provided several alternative guises to reflexivity which can aid the researcher; reflexivity as introspection, reflexivity as intersubjective reflection, reflexivity as mutual collaboration, reflexivity as social critique, and reflexivity as discursive deconstruction. Consequently, reflexivity’s use can be understood in a multitude of overlapping ways depending upon the aim and function of its application. Finlay (2002) likened each form of reflexivity to a map helping to negotiate the swamp of social research. For example, Purdy highlighted a reflexive awareness of her role as ‘female ethnographer’ in
an elite male dominated rowing context (Purdy & Jones, 2011). In terms of Purdy’s work, she was able to manipulate her role through becoming a ‘sister’ and ‘daughter’ to the athletes and coaches of her study (Purdy & Jones, 2013). Therefore, through examining the role of the researcher, reflexivity can help provide clarity to the self-in-relation-to-other. Embracing this perspective, St. Pierre (1997) suggested that through examining the researcher’s relationship to the research process, we can shift the way we see the world and the boundaries of our subjectivities.

Grounded in the possibility of shifting boundaries, Day (2012) asserted that the value of reflexivity also stretches to further understanding the position of the researcher. The position of the researcher has often been described as paradoxical (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For Acker (2000), an ‘insider’ researcher is required to create distance between himself/herself and the social phenomenon, whilst the ‘outsider’ must work to get as close as possible. Both aim to gain an acute understanding of experience and meaning whilst maintaining awareness of personal biases and preconceptions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The importance of reflexivity, then, can help move the researcher’s position from one that is fixed and potentially limiting, to one that is dynamic. The principle here is to shift our understanding of the research relationships beyond any insider/outside positional dichotomy (Day, 2012). Murray (2003), for example, elaborated on her own field experiences to describe how her understanding of relationships with participants developed over time, moving from acquaintances to informants. Reflexive understanding here allowed Murray to critically examine the strategic ‘fronts’ she adopted within the field (Goffman, 1959). More specifically, the varying roles she played as a sociologist, feminist and agent worker were a point of crises within her research, and reflexivity served as a tool to clarify how each of her ‘selves’ was meaningful to the research. Analysing the conflicting roles and ‘fronts’ meant certain relationships and decisions became more ostensible for the integrity of the research.
This is not, however, to say all blemishes and complications of social research can be avoided or overcome through reflexivity. Indeed, despite several authors having highlighted the value of reflexivity within the ‘messy’ nature of research (e.g., Finlay, 2002, 2003; Lincoln et al., 2011; Day, 2012), the promise of reflexivity should not be overstated. For, as Wasserfall (1997) identified, researcher reflexivity “is not in itself a process for overcoming distortion or exploitation” (p.152). For example, according to Day (2012), reflexivity has limited influence when dealing with power dynamics within fieldwork. In this respect, Purdy and Jones (2013) warned against researchers merely appreciating their social position and called for a better recognition of the dynamic and varying roles we play when gathering data. Following Patai (1994), simply addressing the position of the researcher is not enough, for “we do not escape from the consequences of our positions by talking about them endlessly” (p.70). In this way, reflexivity is not something we can simply accept as a standard methodological practice (Pillow, 2003). The concern here is to better account for the roles, positions and subjectivities we bring to the field to ensure access and acceptance.

While I agree that reflexivity does not and cannot address every shortcoming, I used it as a way to negotiate the swamp of fieldwork (Finlay, 2002). In this respect, reflexivity was adopted throughout, not to record the environment under study, but “for ‘recording’ the observer” (Lofland, 1971, p.234). More specifically, the aim was to better appreciate the positions and role(s) I, and the participants, adopted within the fieldwork. In doing so, a reflexive record was maintained alongside the field notes gathered. This often took the form of comment boxes created alongside data extracts within the unfolding script. The technique used here is akin to ‘reflexivity as introspection’. In keeping with Finlay (2002), the purpose was to promote challenging questions regarding personal experience as a springboard for interpretation and insight. However, accepting reflexivity has many guises, the supervisory team also contributed to the reflexive capacity and process by constantly engaging in critical
‘data session’ (see page 101). The subsequent dialogue between researcher and supervisor aligns with Finlay’s ‘reflexivity as mutual collaboration’. Taken as a whole, reflexivity was an attempt to ‘open up’ what may have been previously implicit, including position, assumptions, motivations and outcomes (Finlay, 2002).

3.4 Ethnomethodological ethnography

Ethnography has a rich history that stretches back to the 1900’s and has developed into a key qualitative research method. For Wolcott (1990), ethnography is best described as “a picture of the ‘way of life’ of some identifiable group of people” (p.188). The term ethnography is made more understandable through tracking the roots of the method. Ethnography combines the Greek words ‘ethnos’, meaning people, with ‘graphein’, meaning to write. The desire to write and describe cultures originated with anthropologists who would conduct ethnographic work to complement their, at the time popular, ‘ethnologies’; that is, historical comparative studies of data collected on non-Western societies (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, anthropologists soon moved away from historical studies in favour of conducting their own first-hand empirical investigations and interpretations of organisations and cultures; these took the form of ethnographies. The subsequent ethnographies undertaken by early anthropologists came to be recognised as a rite of passage for their work (Sands, 1992). Sands (2002) recognised Bronislaw Malinowski was perhaps the first renowned ethnographer. Malinowski asserted human behaviour could be studied in a rigorous way despite occurring in naturalistic environments. The hallmark of his ethnographic work involved long-term immersion into a culture. The purpose was to allow the researcher to investigate and understand various cultural aspects such as language, rituals and interactions (Tracy, 2013).
Ethnography’s developments can also be traced to the ‘Chicago School’ of the 1920’s to the 1950’s. Here, a group of sociologists at the University of Chicago conducted case studies examining social groups within (at the time) modern US communities (Angrosino, 2007). However, following discontent with the previously privileged statistical correlations gathered through methods including, questionnaires and surveys, the sociologists began to immerse themselves into the cultures they wished to study. This ethnographic work developed in response to the existing positivist sociology that dominated at the time. In doing so, ethnography’s movement in research followed, spreading into varying disciplines, sub-disciplines and associated theoretical orientations, such as, ethnomethodology (Atkinson et al., 2002; Angrosino, 2007).

Given ethnography’s multidisciplinary development, a current understanding of it can be somewhat ‘fuzzy’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In fact, Tracy (2013) suggested that the wide variety of methodological approaches associated with ethnography is better described as ‘ethnographic methods’. The term better captures the participant observation and field interviews that are usually deployed with ethnographic work, and, in doing so, preserves the more traditional term ‘ethnography’ for long-term, fully immersed and holistic studies of cultures (Tracy, 2013). The purpose here, however, not only attempts to clarify ethnography’s role within this project but, more importantly, explores ethnomethodologically informed ethnography as the research design adopted.

The enormous body of research adopting ethnographic methods and approaches have used various theoretical orientations, aims, and models of practice within their work. However, ethnographic work shares a number of key commitments; the careful observations of behaviours and communities; an emphasis on the research process and how researchers may enter the field; and direct, sustained contact with individuals in the context of their lives (Angrosino, 2007). Fetterman (1989) suggested ethnography is “the art and science of
describing a group or culture” (p.11). The subsequent ethnography attempts to capture interpersonal behaviours, interaction, language, material productions, and beliefs (Angrosino, 2007). Thus, rather than view the ethnographer as an ‘objective’ recorder of events, they must ‘enter into’ the culture under study (Charmaz, 2004). The trademark of ethnographers is their attempt to become a part of the culture through seeing, feeling and gaining first-hand experience of the members that comprise it (Atkinson, 2012). This is no easy task, and ethnographers can often take a significant amount of time to ‘enter’ or be ‘accepted’ in the culture being investigated. For example, Ken Pryce spent four years studying West Indian life in Bristol (Pryce, 1979). Similarly, Martos-Garcia, Devis-Devis and Sparkes (2009) spent two years in a high security prison as part of their ethnographic work.

In terms of sport coaching, recent work has usually not amounted to this quantity of time ‘in the field’. For example, Chris Cushion spent 10 months studying an academy football team (Cushion and Jones, 2006), meanwhile, Laura Purdy spent five months within a rowing culture (Purdy et al., 2009). The length of time in the field, however, does not guarantee rich data. Rather, the process is dependent upon the culture and the time required for the researcher to secure ‘immersion’. Immersion, as mentioned earlier, is crucial for the ethnographer and generally denotes being a part of the culture. The significance relates to the researcher gaining rich first-hand experience of a culture so that members can recognise the details of the description as accurate (Fetterman, 1998). Whilst the purpose of immersion is clear, engagement into a different culture can be littered with complicated decisions for the researcher. For example, in Parker’s (1998) ethnographic study of a Youth Trainee (YT) programme at a professional football club, he was required to adapt his role as an individual to be accepted by the players (participants). In the process, Parker was obliged to hide his own identity and beliefs to avoid jeopardising his position and immersion within the group. For instance, the author recalled an example where he was required to remain silent whilst the
group verbally degraded a female student despite conflicting with his feminist beliefs. This posed both ethical and personal dilemmas for the many selves the author brought to the field (researcher, feminist, footballer), as well as potentially compromising the richness of his ethnographic work. Atkinson (2012) suggests this is indicative of the paradoxical nature of ethnographic work. The ethnographer is expected to become a participant whilst remaining an academic observer. Whilst this is a difficult and often confusing task, the aim is to allow shifts in role, status and identity. Gaining first-hand experience on multiple levels means that “ethnographic modes of knowing are shifted into a higher gear” (Atkinson, 2012, p.33).

When in the field, the ethnographer can draw upon a family of methods to collect data (e.g., Fetterman, 1989; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; O’Reilly, 2009). Examples of these methods include formal and informal interviews, focus groups, fieldnotes, reflexive journals and participant observation. Drawing upon a variety of data collection techniques, alongside sustained contact with participants, allows the ethnographer to provide richly written accounts of the social phenomenon under study (O’Reilly, 2009). For Sands (2002), however, ethnographic fieldwork can only be accomplished through comprehensive investment of time, ethnographer and other. In this regard, understanding the foundations of ethnography means the nuances of ethnographic work are not restricted to merely description, but include the process of what the researcher deems worthy of description (Wolcott, 2010).

Ethnography’s longstanding significance within social sciences has not been understated (e.g., Fetterman, 1989; Wolcott, 1990, 1994; Alder & Alder, 1991; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; O’Reilly, 2009). In an emerging field like sports coaching, ethnography’s inclusion as a research design has seen an increase in popularity (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Purdy et al., 2009). However, following the choice to use Garfinkel’s writings to examine the social milieu selected, the ethnographic research design utilised in this study is ethnomethodologically informed. For ethnomethodologists, retrospective participant accounts
fail to preserve and identify the details required to create social order (Rawls, 2002). As a result, ethnomethodological studies have drawn heavily upon participant observation as their primary research method (e.g., Wieder, 1974; Jimmerson & Oware, 2006; Liberman, 2013). Ethnomethodology materialised from a ‘bottom-up’ emphasis to the examination of social order. Rather than accepting Parson’s orthodoxy that advocated internalised norms as explanation of social practice, ethnomethodology pre-empted that members indigenously organised the ‘rationality’ of their own practice (Schutz, 1962). In doing so, Garfinkel’s methods for understanding social order shifted to an attention on participants’ methods for accomplishing coherent social life, including everyday activities such as, queuing for a bus (Garfinkel, 2002). The ensuing central tenants of ethnomethodology have meant the increasing diversity of ethnomethodological work has been guided by an overlapping set of principles and ideas. However, ethnomethodology in itself is not a method with a prescribed set of research instructions (Rawls, 2002).

A growing body of writers have adopted what can also be described as an ethnomethodological ethnography (e.g., Dant & Wheaton, 2007; Crabtree, Rouncefield & Tomlie, 2012; Tomlie & Rouncefield, 2013). Whilst Maynard (1989) claimed that ethnographic and discourse studies can offer rich information that allow for better documentation of social structure, social order and interactions, a central concern of ethnography is to question ‘what do participants see?’ However, such a perspective can be complemented with ethnomethodological insights by discovering features which ‘allow’ for the participants’ worlds ‘to be’ seen (Pollner & Emerson, 2001). An influential example comes from Wieder’s (1974) study of inmates telling ‘the code’ (i.e., an explanation of deviant behaviour) of life within a ‘halfway house’ (rehabilitation centre). Here, Wieder revealed how the inmates ‘actualised’ the codes, rather than asserting a substantive code (Coulon, 1995). For Widmer (1986) then, whilst the work with inmates drew upon a
conventional sociological approach (ethnography), the perspective was still distinctively informed by ethnomethodology. In this way, “the code does not exist outside of the situation in which one tried to uncover it” (Coulon, 1995, p.22). Rather, the participant’s interactions are where the researcher is shown, not solely through language, how the situation is structured.

Ethnomethodological ethnography aims to provide a complementary arrangement through harnessing both perspectives (i.e., ethnography + ethnomethodology) of the social world (Pollner & Emmerson, 2001). A more recent example can be taken from Jimerson and Oware (2006) where ethnomethodology and ethnography were used in combination to explain the conduct and interactions of Black male basketball players. Here, the authors contrasted a focus on setting (ethnography) with a focus upon the activity (ethnomethodology) to explore how the players told the ‘code of the streets’. The subsequent combination of ethnography and ethnomethodology has been described by Holstein and Gubrium (2011) as a hybridized analysis of reality construction. The purpose is for ethnomethodological sensibilities to better inform researchers at the cross roads of institution, culture and social interaction. Consequently, an ethnographic method is developed through not only understanding how the members of a society ‘see’ the world, but demonstrating how those members ‘do’ the world; that is, how members “recognize, demonstrate, and make observable for each other the rational character of their actual, and that means their occasional, practices” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.8). Thus, an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography is a perspective in which a conversation with ethnomethodology is able to develop ethnography’s appreciation of depth, limits and complexity (Pollner & Emerson, 2001; Jimerson & Oware, 2006). This process was an on-going iterative one that involved a commitment to Garfinkel’s writings, which was used as a ‘framework’ to interpret
observations, whilst an ethnographic approach was adopted towards the collection of new ideas.

Both ethnography and ethnomethodology are bottom-up approaches to understanding social settings. However, ethnography’s emphasis concerns interpreting the perspective of those under study, whilst ethnomethodology pays specific attention to the procedures that allow participants to create social order. The difference in attention can be more clearly distinguished by comparing Anderson’s (1999) and Wieder’s (1974) outline of ‘codes’ of conduct. For Anderson (1999), the codes of the street identified were ethnographic and set out to explain the parameters of interaction that occurred between the subjects studied. However, Wieder’s ethnomethodological ethnography, whilst concurring with this perspective, was able to develop the insights offered by the codes through demonstrating ‘how’ the codes were told. Therefore, Wieder (1974) presented the codes as a way of justifying actions among the participants. In this respect, as Jimmerson and Oware (2006) highlighted, the diversity of ethnography is developed by taking the utility of participants’ accounts and examining how they are produced. In turn, Pollner and Emerson (2001) suggested ethnomethodology can be used to heighten the sensitivities of ethnographic methods, and augment subjects’ appreciation of practice.

3.5 Theoretical framework: Ethnomethodology

Theory is a guide to practice. Fetterman (1989) suggested theoretical models or implicit personal models about how things work, are required to define and tackle any problem under study. In terms of this thesis, the writings of Harold Garfinkel and ethnomethodology were utilised as a lens to inform the ethnographic work undertaken (Garfinkel, 1967, 2002, 2006). It is important to note that, whilst ethnomethodology has been regarded as a theoretical perspective, ethnomethodology is not a theory in itself; that is, ethnomethodology does not
attempt to explain interaction in any abstract terms (Rawls, 2006). Ethnomethodology’s focus is an attention to how members recognize, produce and manage interactions in locally organised situations (Garfinkel, 1967). To achieve this, as mentioned previously, ethnomethodologists will ask different (and complementary) questions to ethnographers in the field. For example, Maynard (1989) suggested that ethnographers often ask the question ‘how do participants see things?’, whereas ethnomethodologists will ask ‘how do participants ‘do’ things?’ The following section aims to build upon this by clarifying the analytical attention of ethnomethodology.

Ethnomethodology does not consider reality to be a pre-existing entity but asserts that members constantly create their social reality. This position was developed from Garfinkel’s work in challenging his doctoral supervisor, Talcott Parsons, who previously suggested that members of a society follow external rules or norms (vom Lehn, 2013). Rather, the emphasis of Garfinkel (and ethnomethodology) was to explore the methods group members use to ‘actualise’ such rules, norms, identities and motives (Rawls, 2006). It is those very methods that make such rules observable-and-reportable (Coulan, 1995). Consequently, it is through careful observation and analysis of members’ methods, their exchanges and their language, that allow for interpretations of social reality to be uncovered. Ethnomethodology, then, is concerned with the sense making, construction and recognition of social activities by actors themselves (Giddens, 1997). However, as Cheng (2012) recognised, ethnomethodology does not ignore the possible effects of structure. Rather, social structures emerge out of the accounting practices of members’ common sense actions. In this way, Garfinkel (1967) was concerned with “practical activity, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning as topics of empirical study” (p.1). In this way, the rational actions of members, which are often overlooked and assigned residual status, become ethnomethodology’s area of investigation (Garfinkel, 196).
Despite original claims that ethnomethodology is a marginal school (Coser, 1975), strong links between ethnomethodology and classical sociological writers such as Durkheim and Weber exist (Hilbert, 1995). More specifically, Holstein and Gubrium (2011) have claimed similarities between ethnomethodology and Foucauldian approaches to discourse. Here, Holstein and Gubrium (2011) suggested both Garfinkel and Foucault run a parallel, but not shared, scheme. In this regard, Michel Foucault’s work on disciplinary power has been a feature within previous coaching literature (e.g., Johns & Johns, 2000; Denison, 2007, 2010). This Foucauldian perspective appreciates the sensitivities that impinge upon the everyday production of social order; in other words, recognition of the pre-existing larger and smaller social forms and structures. Thus, an ethnomethodological perspective can build upon our current understanding of coaching through documenting the visible-and-observable interactive process by which members create social action and order (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). The focus here is upon the competency required by members to ‘make’ and ‘remake’ recognisable order. The attention then, is not on the individual, but on his or her characteristics that reveal what is required to achieve recognisable local order (Rawls, 2002). Therefore, ethnomethodology is not to be mistaken as solely examining the individual but upon the interconnected, indexical and contingent accomplishment of members.

In spite of the growing number of ethnomethodological studies, Garfinkel’s writings have been criticised for lacking a distinct theoretical structure (Rawls, 2006). Conversely, Garfinkel’s writings do contain prominent features and a common re-occurring language, which help to organise ethnomethodological investigations. Key concepts are discussed below:
3.5.1 Practical action and accomplishment

Ethnomethodology’s prime concern is with the sense making of members achieved through competent social practices (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). When referring to members, Garfinkel is not referring to a sole person, who breathes and thinks, but a person who is competent in the local production of social order (Coulon, 1995). Thus, Garfinkel suggested an individual, capable of managing everyday affairs without thought, becomes highly competent in the fabric of social practices. It is here where Garfinkel examined the social details often referred to and documented as the ‘just thisness’ or ‘haecceity’ of practical accomplishments (Garfinkel, 1967, 2002, 2005). In this respect, Garfinkel (1967) described social interaction as ‘work’, and suggested members follow social norms and rules to make their actions credible, or ‘accountable’. This was commonly referred to as the ‘seen but unnoticed’ procedures of members within a culture. To provide an example of these social norms, Dillion (2010) cited that when an individual attempts to recollect a story, he or she must distinguish that any justification for ‘what really happened’ must be in accordance with the understanding of members on the receiving end of the story. In Garfinkel’s words, the account must be “adequately told, sufficiently detailed, clear, etc. for all practical purposes” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.15). Members, including the storyteller and audience, must act in accordance with the social rules or shared understandings within that particular setting to make their actions ‘accountable’. Such adherence to the social rules constitutes the ‘seen but unnoticed’ endeavours of everyday life (Garfinkel, 1967).

A more intricate example of social competence is stated within “Passing the managed achievement of sex status in an ‘intersexed’ person” (Garfinkel, 1967). Here, Garfinkel discussed how societies comprise a social gender, containing a set of competencies (shared understandings) for a ‘normal’ sexed individual to accompany their biological gender. In this article, Garfinkel addressed how “Agnes” fulfilled her social role as a female, despite a
biological history as a male, by acting “in accordance with expected attitudes, appearances, affiliations, dress, style of life etc.” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.119). Whilst the ‘work’ done by Agnes resonates with Goffman’s writings on impression management and stigma, Dillon (2010) recognised that Garfinkel’s concern is with the “on-going accomplishments that have to be continuously accomplished” (p.304). In this respect, for the performance or front to be continuous, it must be accomplished and sustained. Agnes was able to do this by understanding the background knowledge required in order to switch her gender using devices, actions and interactions familiar enough to society to make her behaviour ‘accountable’. In the words of Garfinkel, “it would be incorrect to say of Agnes that she has passed. The active mode is needed: she is passing” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.167). What matters here, what matters for ethnomethodological analysis, and what matters for coaching is not that society contains roles and social facts, but members’ on-going social practices accomplish recognisable action and interactions.

3.5.2 Accountability and reflexivity

While accountability commonly refers to liability, and reflexivity is known in social sciences as turning back on oneself (see 3.3.1), Garfinkel’s use of these two terms denote different meanings (ten Have, 2004). As indicated above, accountability refers to actors making their actions understandable to others within their social practices: that is, the “observable-and-reportable” work of actors when engaging in social practices (Garfinkel, 1967, p.1). For example, when waiting for a bus to arrive, an actor is required to stand in a certain position in order to make ‘accountable’ they are waiting and in line to the other members (e.g., bus driver). The subsequent action requires ‘intelligibility’ of members within the social practice to understand the action and to make the action observable (ten Have, 2004). Garfinkel
would suggest this is an example of how actions and shared understandings are commonly assigned residual status; the seen but unnoticed.

As for reflexivity, Garfinkel is referring to the self-analysis of actors’ projects (intentions) to other actors when communicating. However, rather than treating reflexivity as an obstacle for creating social order, ethnomethodology places reflexivity as a primary condition for communicating (Coulon, 1995). In this regard, Rawls (2005) suggested that the intentions of an actor, known as their project, must be negotiated and coordinated amidst the methods for bestowing their thoughts onto others. Garfinkel provides the example of a ‘sequence pair’:

“A acts towards B as if the signs that B provides are not haphazardly given. When we say that A understands B we mean only this: that A detects an orderliness in these signs both with regard to sequence and meanings. The orderliness is assigned to B’s activities by A. The ‘validity’ of A’s conception of the signs generated by B are given in accordance with some regulative principle established for A when his return action evokes a counter action that somehow ‘fits’ A’s anticipations.” (Garfinkel, 2006, p.184)

The resulting interaction is coordinated through a relationship between the first and next actions of the actors involved. In doing so, the reflexivity that Garfinkel refers to is the process of member’s ‘accountability’ and ‘intelligibility’ intertwining through structured interaction. Here, each member attempts to recognise others, and their own, actions through (reflexively) turning back on the interaction to see if the ‘other’ has understood. Consequently, what was meant in the end is not what was meant before the interaction, but emerged from the collaborative efforts of the interaction (Rawls, 2005). The sequential production, therefore, requires what has been described by Garfinkel as ‘mutual intelligibility’. That is, in Garfinkel’s words, actors must “recognise, demonstrate, and make observable for each other the rational character of their actual” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.251).

Reflexivity, then, is considered an on-going negotiation between the individual’s actions and the other individuals involved. The resulting interaction means that when we utter
words while talking, we are constructing the meaning, order and rationality of what we are
doing, for both ourselves and the other. For Coulon (1995), reflexivity refers to the
accomplishment between describing (making accountable) and producing (mutual
intelligibility) actions.

3.5.3 Conversation analysis

The link between conversation analysis and ethnomethodology is rather ambiguous,
particularly for those who study conversation with a non-sociological background. In fact,
Giddens (1997) asserted that even some sociological scholars have been critical of the
importance of ordinary talk when compared to the main concern of sociology. Nevertheless,
Garfinkel’s attention to conversation and language was a premise which built upon the work
of Harvey Sacks. Sacks worked closely with Garfinkel, mimeographing over 2000 pages of
transcribed lectures, which led to the creation of numerous publications examining gaze and
gestures (e.g., Sacks, 1972, 1974).

Conversation analysis has emerged as a (sub-) discipline in its own right (ten Have,
2004), equipped with values, procedures and analytical interests. For example, Groom,
Nelson, Potrac and Cushion (2014) demonstrated the immensely detailed annotations
involved in transcribing and analysing conversation. Whilst this perspective emerged from
ethnomethodological attention to the ‘on-going’ competencies underpinning social order,
ethnomethodological scholars (e.g., Boden & Zimmerman, 1991) have argued that
conversation analysis departed from ethnomethodology when attempting to create fixed
‘rules’ to social order. In its most basic form, conversation analysis aims to describe the
production and expectation of actors’ behaviours and interpretations during conversation
(Heritage, 1984). In this way, ten Have (2004) advocated that the premise of conversation
analysis can be used as “a set of sharp instructions to bring to fore detailed features of the
production of social order” (p.25). With that in mind, Rawls (2006) suggested individuals
must conform to a taken-for-granted order so that a project or motivation can be introduced or established. In this way, actors, through conversation, attempt to bestow their intentions. Therefore, the significance of paying attention to conversation lies in becoming an accessible way to observe interactions (Rawls, 2006).

Utilising the basic premise of conversation analysis, Garfinkel (1967) provided specific case studies illustrating the sense of everyday, common place, conversation. The following pedagogic example is cited from Sacks (e.g., Heritage, 1984; Giddens, 1997), which illustrated how background knowledge and knowledge of context are inextricably linked to the conversations that occur. The conversation goes as follows:

   A: I have a fourteen-year-old-son.
   B: Well, that’s alright.
   A: I also have a dog

In an attempt to interpret this snapshot, B’s responses to the conversation are unclear. However, when the ‘knowledge’ that B is an enquiring landlord to a tenet is provided, the conversation becomes clear. Such background knowledge is the common sense, contextual interpretations within actors’ relationships that allow for producing interaction. This is essential to allow actors to “conduct daily affairs so as to solicit enthusiasm and friendliness or avoid anxiety, guilt, shame, or boredom” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.49). The example illustrates the importance of background knowledge by appreciating the context of conversation.

Despite earlier criticisms (see 2.5), Heritage (1984, p.245) noted that conversation analysis provides a “local here and now picture” to define the situation of which the talk will be orientated. Giddens (1997) supported this assertion when drawing upon Sigmund Freud’s ‘slip of the tongue’. Here, Giddens identified the simple phrase, ‘oops’, as a taken-for-granted and immensely complicated control of appearance and actions. This is a simple example but
has great value in illustrating our social competency and unnoticed awareness required in order to “get things done” (Giddens, 1997, p.75). As a result, it is unsurprising that many of those who have taken up ethnomethodology have developed an interest in conversation analysis and the importance of appreciating the conversation as an essential constitutive feature of most coherent practices. However, Rawls (2002) warns that, whilst talk is inevitably intertwined with the achievements of everyday practice, treating conversation analysis as a highly technical enterprise can lead to detached analysis that merely attempts to aid the modelling of social order. In this respect, the interest with conversation analysis should not obscure ethnomethodology’s project to reveal the methods used by members to create recognisable social order.

3.5.4 Indexical expressions

Building upon the premise that any sign can mean anything, Garfinkel valued the indexicality (sometimes known as deictic) involved within social order. Indexicality is a term derived from linguistics, and means that words, despite having significance across a variety of situations, have specific significance from the situation in which they arise (Coulon, 1995). Thus, indexicality refers to the utterances and language that draw meaning from the context; for example, ‘that’, ‘I’, ‘you’. Garfinkel’s definition of ethnomethodology claimed that specific attention be paid to “the rational properties of indexical expressions” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.11). In his opening chapter to ‘Studies’, indexical expressions were defined as:

“Properties that are exhibited by accounts (by reason of their being features of socially organised occasions of their use) are available from studies by logicians as the properties of indexical expressions and indexical sentences… Each of their utterances, ‘tokens’, constitutes a word, and refers to a certain
person, time, or place, but names something not named by some replica of the word” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.4-5)

In turn, if indexical expressions refer to context specific expressions, then abstract descriptions of so-called objective accounts of actors achieving social order, fail to appreciate the uniqueness of each context. Whilst indexicality does not originate with ethnomethodology, it is from a consideration of context that ethnomethodological interrogation has developed (Coulon, 1995). For Garfinkel then, any attempt to remedy indexical expressions is problematic as they are tied to local circumstances (ten Have, 2004).

As a result, Heritage (1984) recognised that utterances and inferences (indexicality) are intrinsic to a culture and, therefore, are essential to the aims of ethnomethodology’s ‘respecification’: that is, to “re-specify the concrete details of ordinary activities as details of the analysing devices and of the methods that warrant the use of these devices” (Garfinkel, 2002, p.95). The notion here directly relates to the practical accomplishments of members because, as Coulon (1995) recognised, the significance of daily language for any member derives from the context in which that language appears. The words do not hold transparent meanings themselves and, consequently, if meaning is not independent of the circumstances, the members must establish and communicate meanings reflexively (Liberman, 2013).

3.5.5 Student tutorials (breaching experiments)

A fundamental tenet of Garfinkel’s writings was that shared practices and background knowledge are essential to the ‘work’ carried out by members to maintain order. As a result, Garfinkel used breaching experiments as a way of exploring and illuminating the shared practices which exist. The experiments were designed to “disrupt the routines that comprise particular social realities so as to demonstrate the fragility that underlies everyday social order” (Dillon, 2010, p.305). Here, Garfinkel encouraged his students to engage with a series
of peculiar and quasi-natural experiments to highlight the taken-for-granted social order. These experiments became known as ‘student tutorials’. However, such experiments have been one of the major misconceptions concerning Garfinkel’s work. Cheng (2012) recognised ethnomethodology’s objective is not to prove or explain the rules present within social practices. Rather, the tutorials were designed to illustrate the first-hand achievements of actors to construct their social worlds (Rawls, 2002).

Building upon this premise, Rawls (2002) described Garfinkel’s student tutorials as ‘bracketing’. Despite affinities with phenomenology, this is not to be confused with the phenomenological term. For, as Cheng (2012) identified, Garfinkel’s investigation concerned the practices and common sense knowledge of members. Unlike phenomenologists, postmodernists or pragmatists, the bracketing (breaching experiments) highlighted the ‘really’ there, locally produced world (Rawls, 2002). Thus, Garfinkel’s tutorials illustrated to students the accountability required to produce recognisable action within the setting, in addition to the accounting procedures relevant for further practices; in other words, the “common sense knowledge of social structures” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.76).

In terms of the types of experiments engaged in, when studying the routine grounds of everyday action, Garfinkel (1967) had his students go home and assume the role of boarders. The students’ actions disrupted the common sense routines of family members. Breaching the rules meant that the persons involved became ‘disturbed’, and in many cases, family members demanded justification for such action. In addition, the social malaise meant that when the students did not re-affirm the social order, “the scenes exploded with the bewilderment and anger of family members” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.47). After completion, students often reported a feeling of relief and a requirement to explain their actions so that social order was re-established. Again, the experiment highlighted the ‘seen but unnoticed’ work actors use to maintain social order (Garfinkel, 1967).
A further example of Garfinkel’s breaching experiments came in the form of modifying the game tic-tac-toe (Heritage, 1984). Here, students would offer opponents to go first before ignoring their subsequent move and change the position of their opponent’s markers. The consequent actions breached the (shared) rules of the game and the understandings between players. Like the family members, when experimenters did not adhere to the common rules of the game, the other participant would react with anger and bewilderment. However, unlike the families, experimenters noted that some participants were able to ‘make-sense-of’ the situation by abandoning the rules of the game (Heritage, 2008). The results highlighted the on-going and contingent interpretation of social order. In this way, Cheng (2012) described Garfinkel’s conception of social and practical order as constructivist. Thus, any attempt to create concrete social rules renders social order invisible; otherwise, analysing the production of actions, meanings and mutual understandings would be a simple task (Heritage, 2008).

3.6 Setting the scene: Entering a ‘modern’ football club

The study took place at a semi-professional football club, Bayside Rovers F.C. (pseudonym given). Bayside Rovers F.C. were one of many ambitious semi-professional teams striving for promotion in an elusive hunt for full-time football. Bayside’s primary focus was the success of their first team, which was run by Steve (all names used are pseudonyms) and a close supporting coach, Joe. Both coaches oversaw the first and second XI teams, working in conjunction with a further set of coaching staff; Bobby and Dave. Since his appointment over half a decade ago, Steve had ‘steadied the ship’ at Bayside, achieving back-to-back promotions and had taken the team on a number of formidable cup runs. The team trained two to three times a week, with one or more matches a week depending on schedules.
Although unclear, financial remuneration was provided for the coaches, managers and playing staff.

In terms of their coaching careers, the staff at Bayside had a range of credentials and experiences. Both first XI coaches had highly respectable playing careers and a claim to ‘know the game’. Steve pursued his passions for coaching following an illustrious career as a professional footballer, playing in the highest tier of English football. His résumé included a few assistant roles before taking over at Bayside Rovers F.C. Steve had a strong pedagogy-rooted focus on developing tactically and technically adept players, who had the capability of moving to bigger clubs than Bayside. In addition, Steve was an UEFA ‘A’ licence qualified coach; that is, the second highest level of coaching qualification available in football. As for Joe, whilst not having played professionally, he had enjoyed an excellent non-league career. His coaching career exceeded Steve’s in both length and success; Joe’s résumé was scattered with numerous non-league championships and high calibre coaching positions. Most notably, Joe held a head coach position at a Premier League football club academy. Like Steve, Joe had a high-awareness for both the technical and tactical aspects of football, and placed an emphasis upon the pedagogical aspects of coaching.

The football club consisted of over 40 participants spread throughout the two teams, including coaches, players and administrative staff. More specifically, players represented the first XI or the reserve XI, depending on selection and de-selection. Selection was based upon form, injury and prestige. Whilst the coaches had various input upon selection, the final decision on players was overseen by Steve.

Finally, all the coaching staff imposed a unanimous playing style upon the Bayside teams. This meant Steve was adamant to develop and nurture ‘young’ players through the football club. Following a few difficult years, Bayside had achieved some success which
meant the club’s footballing philosophy attracted considerable attention from young players who aspired to negotiate semi-professional and, in doing so, potentially professional football.

### 3.6.1 Doing fieldwork: Procedure

The fieldwork for the ethnography was conducted throughout a full football season at Bayside Rovers F.C, lasting approximately 10 months. The case study football club (i.e., the research setting) included a milieu of four coaches working with two teams who trained, and sometimes played, twice a week throughout the season. The resulting schedule meant both coaches and players spent a minimum of four days a week at the club. As the researcher, I replicated this routine through attending all training sessions and matches during the period under study. This included attendance at several informal and formal meetings among the coaching staff and between the coaching staff and players. My claim to ‘being there’ also included various social 'times' surrounding both training, matches (i.e., in the build up and time immediately following both games and training) and any team bonding events scheduled. In this regard, observations were conducted whilst participating within the sessions, as well as from the side-lines. Participation in the sessions (as a player) allowed for a greater sense of integration and invitation to any social gatherings away from the training ground (and coaches). Through adopting the dual role of a player and researcher, I was granted full access to all meetings between coaches and players. However, attendance to private meetings among the coaching staff proved to be a much harder task, particularly in the opening months of the research.

The subsequent events at the football club were primarily recorded through a combination of detailed hand written notes, audio-recorded notes and numerous transcriptions from interviews and focus groups, which were recorded with a Dictaphone. The interpretive nature of this project meant any fieldnotes taken were regarded as an
opportunity to “rethink, undo, and shape the on-going research process and products” as opposed to collecting ‘facts’ (Ely et al., 1997, p.18). This meant the fieldnotes constructed were used to challenge and develop the resulting observations. In conjunction, a reflexive journal was maintained throughout the fieldwork as a resource to help link the observations and researcher bias.

3.6.2 Data gathering
Participant observation is the most prominent and commonly cited form of data gathering within ethnographic and ethnomethodological work (e.g., Fetterman, 1989; Sands, 2002; Rawls, 2002; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Participant observation is a combined strategy which merges direct participation, observation and introspection, among other means, to better understand the social phenomenon under study (Denzin, 1978). For Fetterman (1989, p.45), the perspective “combines participation in the lives of the people under study, with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data”. This was a task that Atkinson (2012) recognised as paradoxical, for the ethnographer is required to participate, whilst remain an academic observer in (of) the culture. In terms of this project, the purpose of the observational data was to describe, explore and interpret the setting observed, the activities that took place within it, and the people that participated.

Sands (2002) recognised the main purpose of fieldwork is to understand how knowledge is an integral part of the culture and, in ethnomethodological terms, how that knowledge is ‘done’. Thus, discrete note taking for transcription at a later date is often the most pragmatic way of collecting observational data. It is widely cited that fieldnotes are a common ethnographic technique (e.g., Fetterman, 1989; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, Wolfinger (2002) asserted that the process and practice of taking notes is often neglected and taken-for-granted. In terms of my participation and immersion in the culture, I was required
to negotiate when and where note taking was acceptable. This was an evolutionary process and required a level of flexibility and intuition (discussed in 3.9.2).

In addition, ethnography encompasses a variety of research methods to understand culture and, therefore, I was not confined solely to observations. Fetterman (1989) proposed that interviews can help clarify the perceptions of participants. In doing so, interviews were valuable as a different method to support and challenge the observational work. In keeping with Fetterman (1989), there are general categories of interview depending on the situation; that is, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, informal interviews and retrospective interviews. The benefits of drawing upon a family of interviews include, maintaining rapport, the generation of rich accounts and to ensure transparency to the participants. For example, Fetterman (1989) suggested that structured or semi-structured interviews are most appropriate for an ‘outsider’ researcher to help break down boundaries and build rapport. However, given my ‘insider’ position for this project, informal interviews/conversations were the most commonly used form.

Thus, echoing the work of Purdy et al. (2009), I used informal interviews to facilitate and confirm the accuracy of the observations I gathered. In this respect, informal interviews were akin to “casual conversations” with a “specific but implicit research agenda” (Fetterman, 1989, p.48). Thus, accepting that coaching arises in, with and from the culturally structured world which houses it, the use of these methods were aimed at capturing the often overlooked everyday realities of context.

3.6.3 Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is a complicated, messy and confusing process that cannot be easily defined (Taylor, 2014). Whilst qualitative data analysis is (or should be) rigorous, the process has been described as artful, requiring the interpretive researcher to make sense of the
The research process from the outset (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The process of analysis is continuous and, therefore, reducing analysis to specific forms or sections is limiting. In keeping with this notion, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggested that ethnographic work does not have a distinct stage of analysis. The authors dismiss that steps may be implemented in order to successfully analyse data. Rather, data analysis can be viewed as an evolution, which starts in the pre-fieldwork phase (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). In this regard, the qualitative researcher should aim to be what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) dubbed an ‘analytic bricoleur’: that is, possessing an ability to appreciate diversity within methodologies and adeptly use associated skills to analyse data, whilst maintaining a coherent ontological and epistemological position (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The notion of analytic bricoleur is, therefore, a fruitful suggestion.

Ethnographic data takes the form of ‘unstructured’ long descriptive fieldnotes, audio transcriptions and interview transcripts (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Consequently, the task of analysis is to develop the unstructured data into categories to capture relevant aspects of the fieldwork. These have been referred to as themes, which can then be analysed and ‘made-sense of’ (Tracy, 2013). One way of doing this is to use established (often sociological) theories to develop such insights (e.g., those of Bourdieu and Foucault). Using theory or themes to indicate relevant data is often known as deductive analysis. The concept here involves moving from the general to the specific (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). On the other hand, given the time spent in the field, the everyday recurrent nature of ethnographic data means that specific incidents can be taken, ‘made-sense-of’ and, applied to the general; this process has been described as inductive reasoning (or inductive analysis) (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The purpose here is to allow important data from the fieldwork to be unearthed (by the researcher). However, rather than choosing between inductive and deductive analysis, qualitative researchers may shift from inductive modes of inquiry to
deductive ones. For example, the work of Galli and Vealey (2008) moved from an original deductive analysis to an inductive one as themes and incidences became apparent which were not originally accounted for. In this regard, the researcher must not only challenge his or her observations through critical theory, but also develop themes and ideas through critical introspection.

The relationship between data and ideas then, becomes an approach to analysis known as iteration (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Iteration involves constantly visiting and revisiting data in order to connect themes and theory to refine focus. According to Srivastava and Hopwood (2009), the process of revisiting themes and theory should occur throughout the field work and, therefore, differs from a more traditional conception of data analysis as a monotonous mechanical task. Thus, iterative data analysis procedures are on-going and combine existing explanations and theories, such as ethnomethodological analysis, to make sense of data, whilst the meanings from data constructed in the field are used to challenge and change ideas (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Tracy, 2013). This analytical process, which moves between data already gathered and the on-going data collection, has been labelled ‘sequential analysis’ (Becker, 1976) or ‘interim analysis’ (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Following this process of data analysis can be an overwhelming task, hence, and in keeping with Veal (1997), the unfolding analysis should be guided by continuously revisiting the research questions originally asked.

In relation to this project, adopting an iterative approach to analysis was conceptually helpful when dealing with ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic data collection. However, the continual collection of data over a 10 month season meant the quantity of fieldnotes and transcripts was ‘voluminous’ (Patton, 1990). Copious amounts of data were collected over the course of the ethnomethodological ethnography, but following Purdy et al. (2009), the data presented are in line with the study’s aims. Whilst overlap and repetition
inevitably occurred, the findings were not privileged on the quantity of times an event occurred. Subsequently, I was required to take a pragmatic approach to organising the mass of data. Following each session in the field, the ‘loose’ fieldnotes and Dictaphone recordings were transcribed and subject to an immediate line-by-line examination. Here, the scrutiny involved developing the richness of the notes and beginning to see their ‘fit’ with previous data. Consequently, a unique label was given to each unfolding document of data collection. It is important to note that the initial label given was not a specific ‘code’ to follow. Rather, organising in such a way meant that I was able to easily navigate the considerable amount of data generated over the course of the fieldwork. In doing so, this initial phase helped to develop familiarity with the data, a crucial aspect of data analysis. Tracy (2013) would refer to this process as an initial ‘idea phase’.

Following the initial ‘idea phase’, a more systematic ‘coding’ technique was used to move the raw data set into themes. The process here involved primary-cycle coding and secondary-level codes (Tracy, 2013). Primary-cycle coding referred to the use of key words as descriptors alongside the data collected (first-level codes). The first-level code then helped to move the data set into ‘larger’ themes. The next step involved second-level codes. Here, the original ‘larger’ codes identified in the primary-cycle were critically examined for nuances before categorising the data into interpretive concepts. In keeping with Tracy (2013), the purpose here was to explain, theorize, and synthesize interpretations and patterns of data. However, the intricacies and subtleties of the data meant that the sense making procedure was not a linear process and thus required continual revisiting between codes and themes (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Taylor, 2014).

Adopting this coding technique meant that the themes and concepts generated could be compared with those previously established. The flexibility to move backwards and forwards within the data set aligned with what Charmaz (2003) labelled a constant
comparative method. The comparative process allowed me to ‘make-sense-of’ and construct underlying patterns from the everyday behaviours and interactions during the fieldwork. The significance of this process was that key points in the categories could be added to reflect the nuances of the data without having to ‘reduce’ them to more simplistic numerical coding (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000). That said, whilst Charmaz (2008) suggested the comparative method allows for scrutiny and conceptualisation, Glaser (2003) asserted that the data cannot be rendered objective. In this respect, the development of themes required continual engagement with reflexivity in relation to my interpretation and construction of new themes.

3.6.4 Writing up

Following the collection and analysis of data, a researcher must attempt to reflect and represent the social reality under investigation through a process known as ‘writing up’. According to Richardson (1990), the process of writing fieldwork is riddled with adding, deleting and editing sentences, which develops the process of analysis. In this way, qualitative writing is, in fact, a way of ‘knowing’. However, as Markula and Denison (2005) identified, any social reality offered by the researcher is always ‘storied’, as opposed to objective and factual. In this respect, Groom, Nelson, Potrac and Smith (2014) recognised that the researcher must appreciate his or her role in the story through maintaining a coherent ontological and epistemological position. In doing so, authors may differ regarding how explicit they are regarding their role within the story provided (Markula & Denison, 2005). Therefore, the researcher must demonstrate an awareness of the genre of representation selected (Ely et al., 1997). Thus, to help value the contributions of how we write the world, Sparkes (2002) discussed several different genres to capture the social; including, realist tales, confessional tales, poetic representation and ethno-drama. The purpose of the following section is to clarify the representation used within this study.
The boundaries between fact and fiction are sometimes difficult to draw. In fact, Coffey and Atkinson (1997, p.127) stated that “all written work, however factual or authoritative, is composed and crafted”. Van Maanen (1989, p.8) added that “ethnographic writing is far more complex, overlapping, ambiguous and multifaceted than it sometimes is made to appear”. For that reason, I followed Van Maanen in suggesting that the classification offered below is a loose one. In this way, different genres used for writing up and capturing fieldwork are considered frameworks, bounded by conventions although far from being rigid and impermeable (Sparkes, 2002). This is not to advocate that we lose the structure involved in writing. Rather, following Ellingson (2011), I believe qualitative projects can benefit from “loosening some of the unproductive methodological constraints” (p.595). As a result, Ellingson (2011) offered a useful suggestion that a continuum of writing genres can be an effective conceptualisation for understanding analysis and representation; that is, writing should be “anchored by art and science, with vast spaces that embody infinite possibilities” (p.595). Ultimately, the purpose is for the representation of findings to capture and portray the reality of those under study, whilst maintaining a high level of quality.

In terms of this thesis, as stated the results are the product of 10 months of fieldwork. They are based upon me ‘being there’: that is, I claim to be a witness to the phenomenon under study. Thus, an element of ‘truth’ can be applied to the empirical findings (Richardson, 2000). Following such a claim to have ‘been there’, the most appropriate representation of this study would align with the realist tale (Sparkes, 2002). Van Maanen (1988) identified four features of the realist tale that can be used as a structure to help the storyteller (and reader); (1) the ‘experiential author’ removes the “I” (observer) out of the report to increase authority and reduce worries of subjectivity; (2) ‘typical forms’ are presented as representation of events attempts to describe participants ‘as they are’. The focus on minute and precious details; (3) the presentation attempts to capture the ‘native’s point of view’,
conveying to the reader the opinions put forward are not their own; (4) finally, ‘interpretive omnipresence’ relates to the interpretation presented is taken-for-granted as the correct interpretation. Self-reflection and doubt are not the central matters in the realist tale.

However, adopting the realist tale as a detached perspective, hinting at a singular truth, would be problematic on two fronts. Firstly, given my perspective and position within this research, such an approach would suggest my data are uncontaminated and from an omniscient point of view, which they are not. Secondly, in keeping with Groom et al. (2014), the notion of a singular truth is inconsistent with the (ontological and epistemological) assumptions already addressed within this chapter. The reflexive turn (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) has challenged notions of objectivity in ethnographic writing (Blackman, 2007). As a result, despite claims of ‘being there’, the representation of the findings in this study do not claim author evacuation.

Similarly, regardless of ‘insider status’, full participant observation does not assert a privileged right to speak for the people under study. Thus, following the crisis of representation in contemporary research which emerged in the 1980’s, I accept that only a fragment of the story can be represented. Indeed, Sparkes (1995) questioned whether the qualitative researcher can really be evacuated as an author, for as Richardson (1990) identified, there is no view from everywhere, or nowhere, rather only a view from somewhere (the researcher in this instance). Therefore, in spite of claims that the realist tale ‘swallows up’ the author (Van Maanen, 1989), the stories provided are how ‘I’ called it. Despite the assertion of ‘being there’, the narratives provided don’t necessarily follow the exact order of the data collected (Smith, 2013). I was responsible for interpretation of the data collected, the quotes selected and the shaping of the story presented (Sparkes, 2002).

Such a position means the “boundaries between facts and fiction are difficult to draw” (Coffey & Anderson, 1996, p.127). The point made here is that, even when trying to provide
an accurate account of events, the author is still constructing the events written about (Agar, 1986; Bochner & Ellis, 1996). In this regard, the realist tale has been subject to disapproval. Following Purdy et al. (2009) then, the representation offered in this study has been ‘modified’ to serve a critical agenda; that is, to provide an account more concerned with evocation, rather than representing the ‘truth’ (Sparkes, 2002). Therefore, through permeating the traditional boundaries of the realist tale, the data presented have been dramatized using fictional techniques (Sparkes, 2002). The purpose is to allow the author to be written into the text, not only to capture the participant’s account, but to appreciate the force which has made the account coherent (Agar, 1995). Sparkes (2002) described this method akin to ‘creative non-fiction’. And so, a creative narrative holds the potential to fashion a more personalised and accessible representation of the culture studied from a particular point of view. Therefore, in keeping with Jones and colleagues (Jones, 2006, 2009; Purdy et al., 2009; Potrac et al., 2012), I see this work as sociological as opposed to literary. The situations recreated for the reader are not false, but rather are grounded within my experiences at Bayside F.C.

3.7 Judging this study

Reflexivity has been identified as an important ingredient within this project and qualitative research in general. Reflexivity is a commonly cited technique for ensuring the quality of qualitative research. However, despite attempting to address and recognise the subjectivities of the researcher, Lynch (2000) recognised that the author’s reflexive conviction is not a sole criterion of success. The challenge for the qualitative researcher is to address how the quality of their work can be competently assessed. In this respect, judging the quality of qualitative studies is considered more contentious than doing so for their quantitative counterparts (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). According to Avis (2005), the diversity of qualitative
research means that “what it is, what it is for, how it is done, and how it is to be judged, is the subject of controversy” (p.3). The following discussion attempts to propose how this qualitative study may be judged.

For positivists, validity, reliability and generalizability are the gold standard measures for quality. However, as should have been apparent throughout this thesis, qualitative research, specifically ethnomethodological ethnography, is based upon different ontological and epistemological assumptions. On this basis, Guba and Lincoln (2005, p.202) suggested that applying the criteria used by positivists to qualitative research is “akin to Catholic questions directed to a Methodist audience”.

In this regard, a parallel set of criteria has been provided for qualitative researchers, at the heart of which lies the concept of trustworthiness. This concept was developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989). The criteria consists of four measures; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Consequently, each of the traditional criteria for positivists is replaced and developed for the qualitative investigator. For example, credibility is used to satisfy internal validity; that is, questions regarding whether the findings are congruent with reality (Shenton, 2004). Further clarifying the notion of trustworthiness, Shenton (2004) provided a list of techniques which the qualitative researcher can utilise to successfully meet the ‘gold standard’ criteria. Such techniques include a prolonged familiarity with participants and culture, triangulation (including sources, analysts methodologies and theories), frequent debriefing, negative case analysis and member checking.

While Shenton (2004) claimed that satisfying these techniques were suitable for demonstrating academic rigor within qualitative research, others (e.g., Sparkes, 1998, 2009) claimed that the parallel perspective offered has notable problems. For example, the criteria fail to appreciate the diversity and complexity of qualitative research and, in doing so, the
recommendations are philosophically inconsistent with the ontological and epistemological positions associated with such work. For instance, in the midst of multiple truths, a qualitative researcher using member checking as a method of verification assumes the participant as the external knower possessing truth, which is ontologically problematic (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). In this respect, the subsequent parallel perspective (trustworthiness) appears based on logic not consistent with qualitative research.

In response to these criticisms, Sparkes (1998) proposed that authors can opt for a *diversification perspective*; that is, an attempt to reassess the use of validity in qualitative work. From this perspective, validity might involve some evaluation of how the diverse ways qualitative research is conducted (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Whilst this is theoretically interesting, scholars who seek to reconceptualise the term validity (through validation) are constantly limited by the baggage associated with such a key term. Sparkes (2002), thus, offered a third perspective known as the *letting go perspective*. The following quote by Wolcott captured this alternative view for ensuring quality in qualitative research:

> “a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and writing plausible explanations from them, something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the Truth…And I do not accept validity as a valid criterion for guiding or judging my work. I think we have laboured far too long under the burden of this concept (are there others as well?) that might have been better left where it begun, a not-quite-so-singular-or-precise criterion as I once believed it to be for matters related essentially to tests and measurement.”

(Wolcott, 1994, p.366-369)

Through advocating that validity be abandoned, Wolcott’s call for a not-quite-so-singular-or-precise criterion has been supported by Ellingson (2011). Here, Ellingson appealed for a more diverse conceptualisation of qualitative research. Providing a more suitable notion, Smith and Hodkinson (2009) compared the judgement of qualitative research to judgements
about music, paintings and literature. The significance relates to making judgements in relation to time-and-place, and therefore, contingent upon lists of characteristics. This form of relativism is not to be mistaken with that of all knowledge claims are equal in an unregulated fashion. Rather, criteria for judging qualitative research may be used to inform decisions about good research compared to the bad (Smith, 1993).

In this manner, a belief exists that lists may be used as a means for judging qualitative research. The purpose is to use open-ended, subjective (re)interpretations, where items may be added or removed depending upon the study. Following these claims, Tracy (2010) offered eight key ideas described as ‘big-tents’ to help facilitate the judging of qualitative research. Tracy’s criteria are summarised in the table below (Table 2):
**Table 2.** Eight “Big-Tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research (Tracey, 2010, p.840).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for quality (end goal)</th>
<th>Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worthy Topic</strong></td>
<td>The topic of research is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Timely Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rich Rigor</strong></td>
<td>The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Theoretical constructs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data and time in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sample(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Context(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data collection and analysis processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sincerity</strong></td>
<td>The study is characterised by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inclinations of the researcher(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transparency about the methods and challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>The research is marked by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (non-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>textual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Triangulation or crystallisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multivocality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Member reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resonance</strong></td>
<td>The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>variety of audiences through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aesthetic, evocative representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Naturalistic generalisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transferable findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant contribution</strong></td>
<td>The research provides a significant contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conceptually/ theoretically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Morally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Methodologically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Heuristically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethical</strong></td>
<td>The research considers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Procedural ethics (such as human subjects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Situational and culturally specific ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relational ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Existing ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaningful coherence</strong></td>
<td>The study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Achieves what it purports to be about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table provided by Tracy (2010) can still be criticised for suggesting a criteria can capture the diversity within qualitative research. However, Tracy (2010) encouraged scholars to challenge and change the criteria (as a list) through application and engagement within qualitative projects. In this regard, I offer Tracy’s (2010) list, not to resolve any debate when judging qualitative research, but to propose a possible set of principles for the reader to consider when passing judgement on the quality of this work. Criteria used in one place may diminish in importance when compared in a different time and place. Consequently, the list has value by providing a shorthand indication for the core values rather than a taken-for-granted check-list (Tracy, 2010). In doing so, a common language can be identified to facilitate excellence amongst qualitative researchers. The argument made here is akin to Smith and Hodkinson (2009) in suggesting that good music (like research) should be judged as a collective piece, compiled with different instruments to produce a musical composition, rather than on the sole function of each instrument.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics within sport coaching aims to reflect the responsibility of the researcher when attempting to provide an authentic research study (McFee, 2014). The ethical procedures associated with this study were addressed through recourse to Cardiff Metropolitan University and the British Sociological Association’s (BSA) ethical guidelines. Thus, all actors within the text were given pseudonyms’ to protect their identity and maintain their anonymity (Jones, Potrac, Hussain & Cushion, 2006). In addition, personal or compromising features of the participants were ommitted from the thesis (Adler & Adler, 1993). In line with the given guidelines, everything was done to ensure confidentiality and anonymity within the confines of the project’s context. This protocol resonates with the work of McNamee, Oliver and Wainright (2007), who suggested that adequate assurances/promises
regarding anonymity, storage and utilisation of collected data (confidentiality) should be adhered to at all times. In doing so, the participants were explicitly aware that full anonymity and confidentiality could not be guaranteed and the participants retained the right to withdraw from the project at any time. An explanation of the study’s aims and methods were provided to the participants before informed consent was obtained (see Appendix A). The consent of participants, however, was not assumed as a once-and-for-all event, but as a process subject to constant re-negotiation as the project unfolded (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Several scholars (e.g., Dandelion, 1995; Bryman, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2014) have recognised that ‘insider’ researchers are granted access to participants much more easily when compared to their ‘outsider’ counterparts. In this respect, a unique set of ethical complications accompanied the study. Firstly, as Dandelion (1995) put it, to study those in my own ‘backgarden’ meant preserving participant anonymity was restricted. Following my own athletic identity and the choice of research environment, alongside exposure the football club received from external sources (e.g., newspapers, radio and social media), I could not anonymise my participation and association with the club under study. Subsequently, to minimise any attention towards the study’s culture and its participants, Tracy (2013) recognised the importance of ‘cover stories’. Here, the aim was to protect any affiliation with Bayside Rovers F.C. by glossing and skimming over the details of the research environment (e.g., “a ‘semi-professional’ club”) when questioned about the project in day-to-day life. The sentiment is in keeping with McNamee et al. (2007) to ensure the privacy of participants and avoid exploitation.

The strategy, however, does not help to deal with more subtle and ambiguous ethical issues encountered during fieldwork. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) recognised ethical judgement must protect participants from harm, and even the researcher, in some cases (e.g., Wolf, 1991). Thus, when dealing with subtle issues within the field, for example, note taking
in a potentially privatised area such as the dressing room, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.228) claimed that the researcher must act in an “ethically appropriate” manner. Ethical decisions should be based upon the situation, and the researcher(s) should be prepared to defend decisions, whilst maintaining an awareness that others may not agree. Here, McFee’s “treat like a friend” acted as a guiding principle (McFee, 2010, p.157). The proposal is to act in the best interest and well-being of the participants through treating the participants as if they were friends (i.e., questioning how would you like to be treated?).

Whilst this is a useful notion, Blackman (2007) identified that the borders between researcher and researched are not always so easily discernable. Pryce (1979), for instance, recognised that his sustained period of study with the West Indians of Bristol resulted in friendships and bonds that would outgrow the research project. In this case, to increase participant confidence in the sensitivity of the project, participants were occasionally asked to read, clarify and comment on data. In these scenarios, whilst participants may become pre-occupied with ‘where/who am I?’, McFee (2014) suggested the process of ‘checking’ allowed participants to preserve their anonymity, increase sensitivity and help with the accuracy of data. That said, it must be noted that ‘final decisions’, interpretations and data analysis resided with me, the researcher.

3.9 ‘Doing’ research: Unravelling the fieldwork

The purpose of this final section is to provide a confessional tale regarding the fieldwork undertaken at Bayside Rovers F.C. The reason for including this ‘tale’ is to introduce some of the often overlooked realities of conducting research; that is, exploring the difficulties, tensions and troubles I experienced. Thus, following Blackman (2007), the confessional tale offered is an attempt to reveal the ‘hidden ethnography’ through better sensitising some of the issues faced within fieldwork.
The significance of this section is twofold. Firstly, the account aims to demonstrate that my findings are thoroughly contaminated by, and with, my ‘lived experience’. Through recognising my presence, the research can move beyond ‘cleaned-up’ methodology (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) to better inform the reader of the tensions involved in research. Secondly, interaction between researcher, situation and associated questions allow for the construction of rich complex understandings (Williams, 1990). Thus, the confessional account is an attempt to demonstrate a reflexive understanding about the work undertaken (Blackman, 2007). The tale then aims to complement the representation offered (Atkinson, 1991); with the aim being to braid the knower and the known (Van Maanen, 1989).

In relation to this study and my position within the culture, the following account helps to capture the schizophrenic paradox between the outsider and insider roles negotiated within the field as well as the analysis (Van Maanen, 1989). In doing so, I hope to provide an insight to the ‘elsewhere’ within the research context in which I was placed. Therefore, the account aims to supplement the representation of the culture and, subsequently, add to the sincerity and authenticity of the data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). In order to avoid revisiting ground already covered, the following account will only refer to three brief topics of fieldwork; position, practicality and participating. The topics are, of course, overlapping.

3.9.1 Position

The coaches (and players) of Bayside were accepting of the project, making access relatively frictionless. However, a personal conflict developed early into the fieldwork in relation to the position I adopted as both researcher and participant. As the first few sessions went by, I eagerly tried to develop my ‘findings’. I re-read my notes and attempted to refine their direction and scope. My ethnographic eye was weak and uncritical. Here, I leant on the aims and objectives of the project to guide my observations. However, developing a heightened
sense of surrounding, I quickly became more insecure about my position. Was I really going to be able to ‘capture’ the activities and culture? Am I too close? How am I influencing the others? I felt more aware of my actions, of what I was seeing and sensing. The feeling was not as liberating as I had expected. I began to feel lost. I lost myself in fear of; could I really play and capture rich data? I knew I only had ‘one shot’ at this. I had to ‘get it right’.

I began to tailor my actions in an attempt to better understand the different guises of Bayside. For example, I would arrive to every training session at least 20 minutes early. Helping prepare equipment meant I was able to access spare time with the coaching staff. This helped me build a relationship with the coaches that was mutually understood and, therefore, helped develop some of the questions I would ask. The mutual understanding was further aided for two main reasons. Firstly, I had developed into an integral player within the side meaning Steve and Joe were keen to ensure my engagement with the programme. And secondly, as I would probe and tease their understanding of the ‘culture’, they too would probe and tease me for information. In this way, an exchange was formed. This exchange of information was never explicit; more of willingness to accept both parties’ ‘buy-in’. Again, despite becoming more comfortable with my ‘role’ at the club, the distance or closeness from the participants was always at the back of my mind. My insecurities were inflated by an understanding that more traditional ethnographers (e.g., Malinowski) advocated the researcher move to new, untouched grounds to understand the meanings and culture (Sands, 2002). In this regard, the traditional insider/outsider dichotomy was too simplistic. Rather, the distance was contextual and dependent upon the participants being studied. Here, having competence in relation to local practices was more important. For example, as a dual player and researcher, I was somewhat an ‘outsider’ to the coaches. However, when at coffee and asked to judge a performance, I was required to be competent in the practices the coaches displayed, without detection, and at that point, I was an ‘insider’; a fully competent member.
Successfully negotiating this distance resulted in the players sensing an affinity
developed between the coaches and me. In turn, they would often quiz me regarding team
selection, training schedules and information related to the team. At the start of the project
this was a confusing role to accept. However, rather than eschew these insecurities, I was able
to accept that I too constructed my position and, therefore, could try to exploit the different
roles. Instead of accepting interviews as merely an extraction of perceptions from coaches
and players, I was able to use interviews to formalise my role as a researcher. I could then try
to manage distance when it came to interviews (e.g., I wore different clothing, recorded the
interviews, addressed the players more formally). The purpose here was to create a second
layer of data collected through the persona of a ‘professional stranger’ (Agar, 1980), even
when I was comfortable with several of the players. This meant I could interrogate the
players ‘formally’. After sifting through pages of transcription before the next session,
interview transcripts highlighted that the players were describing an ‘official line’ of action
(Garfinkel, 1967). Their accounts were ‘clean’, coherent and well-constructed, meaning I
could probe such accounts through more specified questioning and refined observational
work. Fetterman (1989) would describe this as a form of ‘triangulation’.

For example, when interviewing Richard (a player within the study), I asked how he
felt about ‘being on the bench’. He immediately expressed the importance of the team and
that he was there for support – “I just want the team to do well, it’s about the team”.
However, once the Dictaphone was removed, he confided that he was not concerned for the
player ahead of him in selection; “I just wanted to play,” he explained. The example
illustrates how I could obtain different levels of accounts to developed and pursue ‘hunches’.
The formalised interview created distance for Richard’s official line, but, following the
interview, Richard was able to relax his position for a different account. Ultimately, the goal
was to collect rich data, however, like Edwards and Jones (2016), the flexibility of the methods allowed me to manage and ease the insecurities that haunted my initial fieldwork.

Relatedly, whilst I was fully aware of my intentions to collect data, the aforementioned example with Richard posed larger ethical questions concerning ending my position as a researcher in the field. In keeping with Pryce (1979), the friendships and relationships developed outgrew the research project. As a consequence, the protocol for me leaving the field as an ‘insider’ was further blurred by my on-going and subsequent commitment to Bayside F.C. Thus, complete disengagement from the participants was not possible. Here, a natural end in the season (identified on page 123) granted me a temporal (physical) withdrawal, although it did not satisfy ending the researcher-researchee relationship. Rather, my disengagement was more intricate in the form of role clarity (Iverson, 2009); that is, whilst ‘I’ would not be leaving the setting, my role as a ‘researcher’ would be. Here, I was obliged to be transparent regarding when and where this change would and did take place. Of importance here was to maintain McFee’s (2010) ‘treat like a friend’ principle. It was how I negotiated my exit.

3.9.2 Practicality

Alongside managing distance within the field, capturing the events of the football club was a further learning experience. I originally arrived eager to take notes with a pad and pencil in hand. In reality, I was barely able to write a word in the presence of the players and coaches (perhaps for similar reasons to above). In the opening session, my presence from the corner of the dressing room, with a pen and paper, raised immediate suspicion and disapproval of note-taking. An act of naivety on my behalf, especially when considering I was an established player at the club and, therefore, had previous history with some of the players. Whilst the players became more accustomed to my note-taking over time, the specific mishap made the
participants explicitly aware that I would be recording their actions. The players’ subsequent disapproval, specifically in the dressing room, demonstrated an expectation; they didn’t want to see me writing about it (this will be further clarified in 4.4). In this way, I had inadvertently ‘breached’ the dressing room and the note-pad acted as a ‘student tutorial’ (as per p.74) (Garfinkel, 2002).

So, in pursuit of following a rigorous procedure, I had to be more creative with my note-taking than previously anticipated. For example, whilst a note-pad was treated with scepticism, phones were a more widely accepted feature of the dressing room. In this regard, I could use my iPhone for note-taking without raising suspicion. Here, I could make notes electronically for later transcription and development. In a similar vein, I also became accustomed to carrying shoes to the training ground so that I could keep a Dictaphone close-by. This meant that, despite playing commitments, I could easily disguise a trip for water with an audio description via the Dictaphone before returning to playing. This enabled me to preserve the detail of my observations with more ease by having a recording devise close-at-hand. This became a pragmatic way to collect data. Following this, like others (Pryce, 1979; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), I could then develop and enrich the notes through disciplined and systematic writing following each session which resulted in reaching a point of ‘saturation’ (Fettermen, 1989); at this point, the note-taking process developed into a more arduous task (Pryce, 1979).

3.9.3 Participating

Although large parts of my time in the field concerned interpreting the actions and accounts of the participants, I was also trying to maintain personal playing performances. In this respect, Pryce (1979) recognised there are many complications and tensions of being a researcher and participant at the same time. I would often leave the training ground mentally
(and physically) exhausted. Football had always been my ‘escape’ from everyday constraints. I knew ethnographic work was an investment (e.g., Sands, 2002), however, the task was harder than I had anticipated. I began to expose a bliss naivety that formed the foundations of my participation. I could no longer just turn up, play and enjoy training and matches. In this way, my ethnographic investment was a sacrifice to shift beyond the realms of enjoyment and ‘just doing’. The sporadic hours I spent working late in a bar to make ends meet were preoccupied with scribbling notes, rather than reminiscing patterns of play I had executed. In trying to develop a heightened sense of understanding, I struggled to shift my lens of how I viewed the environment. The task was draining and riddled with insecurity; “have I said too much?”, “How am I playing?” and “should I even be offering my opinion?” I attempted to suspend my own emotions and feelings towards performances through further questioning my influence on the data and the environment.

On one occasion, an argument broke out between two players over a bad tackle. As a player, I was initially furious at the incompetence of the tackler. Later, when discussing the incident with the coaches, I felt a sense of guilt about my contribution. Whilst this was not a unique coming together of players, I could feel the contamination in my notes of how I felt. I wrestled with preserving the detail of the event as I saw it. My fingers hit the key board and the sentences which emerged were riddled with emotion. As a full-stop drew the notes to a close, I felt an ease. But what did this mean for the project? I felt a fraud. How much of my previous data were charged with my own opinion? Had I even been doing this ‘research’ right? I felt a deception towards the participants. I felt exhausted; the clarity of my perception was blurred. I began to doubt everything I did. My own ‘social competence’ was under analysis. In this way, the investment I made in the project had a consuming effect on my life. I had been reminded previously that the project would not be my ‘life’s work’, but at this point, the project permeated every aspect of what I did. Overwhelmed with doubt, I tried to
remind myself that “you are just trying to understand”. I wrestled with the words of Denzin (1970) that, I was not ‘there’ to defend the participants’ culture through being one of them, but I was there to study it. In this way, the project is about ‘others’. However, my access to others was granted through examining my own actions (competencies).

Thus, prior to presenting the results of this study, there were two subsequent aspects that became crucial elements to the work. Firstly, I learnt to embrace such insecurities, subjectivities and questions to develop more textured accounts of my fieldwork. I was engaged with a personal, research and sporting rollercoaster that created several ‘Eureka’ moments in relation to certain terminology. I tried to maintain a clarity of thought through reflexive analysis of my feelings and insecurities. However, like the authors of Toner et al. (2012), Robyn (as Director of Studies) acted as a ‘critical friend’ in these instances. His interpretation became an important critique which often triggered reflexive questions which were previously out of reach. In doing so, my understanding of the fieldwork was developed and the critical ‘data session’ allowed me to challenge some of the mundane responses I was gaining/seeing (Tracy, 2013). A technique used here was to create metaphors as a way of de-familiarising the ‘data’ collected (Klein, 1993). For example, the notion of the team as an ‘orchestra’ was used to better conceptualise the relations between athletic performances (this will be discussed in 4.2).

This confessional has introduced some of the many, dynamic issues that were associated with conducting the ‘fieldwork’. My intention was not to deconstruct these issues. Rather, I have introduced some of my experiences to provide an insight to the reality and authenticity of this work. In doing so, I have attempted to clarify the difficulties experienced in relation to the methodologically ‘cleaned-up’ accounts provided (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). I will return to some of these experiences in the final Chapter of this thesis.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS
4.1 Introduction

The findings presented are done so primarily through the concept of ‘codes’. The idea of ‘dressing room’ codes is based upon previous ethnomethodological work observing patterns of behaviour (Wieder, 1974; Jimerson & Oware, 2006). The ‘codes’ within this study refer to an implicit set of unwritten rules (or shared understandings) that informed the social work done by players, coaches and others at the football club. The codes impacted upon the total organisational work within the football club, and were constructed from what the actors did. Garfinkel would refer to this as their ‘phenomenal field’ (Rawls, 2002). Consequently, actors who intend to influence the environment must have an awareness of contextual codes in order to produce coherent recognisable actions. The resulting intersubjectivity (or shared intelligibility of members) was an achievement of the actors. That said, the codes identified in this study were not concrete. Rather, they were context dependant and in a constant state of flux. The purpose of the following section is to detail and examine how the ascertained codes were continually produced, obeyed and challenged by actors who had contextually mastered a particular set of situated competencies (Rawls, 2006).

Not being static by nature, the codes flowed, twisted and swirled together. Subsequently, the notion of a helix is offered to guide and somewhat conceptualise the following chapter. The purpose of introducing this notion is to provide a diagrammatic map to highlight how critical elements of the codes interlocked like the structure of a helix. The text consequently offers ‘exemplars’; that is, significant examples that embodied particular aspects of the complex culture within the football club (Tracy, 2013). For instance, a change of sentimental expression from the coach (through an understanding of the codes) led players to ‘sense’ that a change was imminent.

In terms of structure, the chapter begins with a brief insight into the context where the fieldwork took place. The intention here is to introduce and highlight some of the key
characters involved. The emphasis then moves to the players’ and coaches’ interactions indicative of the social codes constructed. In turn, the four codes presented are; ‘playing well’, ‘fitting-in’, ‘brotherhood’ and ‘respecting space’. After exploring the codes, the chapter attends to how they were utilised and manipulated in practice (4.6). The chapter concludes by presenting some of the core notions featured throughout the fieldwork; that is, security, insecurity and control. Structuring the chapter in this way provides three progressive insights to the codes; the what, the how, and the why.

4.1.1 “Lacing up”: Club, context and characters

Field note extract [July 7th 2014]

First day of preseason. Greens all the way, no traffic, the car journey to the ground was smooth. Bayside’s dressing room is like a warm bath; it’s comforting. I glance at my watch while the tyres crunch across the car park. 5.20. Plenty of time. I throw my wash bag under one arm, boots in hand, after six weeks off, I’m ready.

Bayside’s ground was partly concealed by houses and trees. The facilities consisted of a car park backing onto a building containing the dressing rooms and offices. The pitch was obscured by the changing rooms. Green fencing surrounded the pitch that was overlooked by several towering flood lights and two small elongated stands. A short walk from the changing rooms was a communal bar known as the ‘club house’. The dressing room was a hub for players (and coaching staff) as they prepared for training and matches. Meetings for coaching staff were also held here. The two changing rooms were clearly marked ‘Home’ and ‘Away’:

Field note extract [July 7th 2014]

I push the door back and hit an outstretched leg, ‘Sorry mate’. Bags fill the floor. There’s an awkward looking boy in the corner, I don’t recognise him. Unfamiliar eyes harass me, adrenaline seeps to my stomach. The room vibrates with a hum of chatter. I find a seat and try to relax.

More players begin to arrive, “Yes Char! How are ya?” Woody bellows across the room. I can’t help but laugh. Woody strolls over; I notice his pristine white socks and colourful trainers. A few stare enviously.

Bayside was a semi-professional football club; that is, some players would receive remuneration for playing, although football was not their full-time occupation. The players all had varying ‘experience’ of senior football. For example, Rhys and Woody had been at Bayside for a number of years, while Callum was returning for his second season having joined from a local ‘youth’ team. Callum’s move to Bayside was regarded as a ‘step up’ in standard. On the other hand, Clive and Seb had previously received professional contracts, and therefore, Bayside was perceived as a ‘step down’.

In addition to those returning (first and reserve teams), new players joined for the season causing a fluctuation in personnel at Bayside. New players joining Bayside was most common at the beginning of the season for numerous reasons; individuals searching for new challenges, ‘a better deal’ (i.e. more money), or their services were no longer ‘required’ at their previous clubs. Whilst the movement of players meant places for selection were highly contested and unstable, decisions on team selection were dictated by the coaching staff:

Field note extract [July 7th 2014]

[The players meet in the changing room before the first session begins.]

The players sit proudly displaying various club emblems on their chest; Bayside’s badge is on mine. Two players slumped in the corner discuss their previous clubs and friends in common. Steve inflicts silence on his arrival. He looks in charge, scans the room and continues past the queue of players. “Nice to meet you Will,” offering his hand. Others stare at Will. Steve acknowledges Rhys and Woody before demanding, “Waters’ done!” Within moments, Steve leaves and chat resumes. The two in the corner discuss Steve’s previous professional career.
The coaching staff were instantly recognisable for two reasons; a general age difference, and an alternative coaching tracksuit. Head coach, Steve, was accompanied by another coach, Joe. The pair worked in tandem. In the extract above, Steve addressed the players while Joe was outside preparing the first element of the training session. Steve and Joe were the architects of Bayside’s team; they dictated which players were involved with which team and, therefore, were regarded as the gate-keepers. Two more coaches accompanied Steve and Joe; Bobby and Dave. Dave was a ‘local legend’. His inclusion, however, was intermittent as he only ever attended match days with the first team. Bobby, on the other hand, was a young enthusiastic coach who was appointed to run the reserve team:

Field note extract [July 7th 2014]

The players disperse into twos and threes. Some keep a ball in the air while others simply pass one back and forth. “Everybody in,” Steve bellows. He leans over to Joe and Bobby; the remark greeted with cynical smiles. Both pause while the mass of players form a crowd around them. Steve begins, “Hi everyone, welcome back to some and welcome to everyone that is new. For those who don’t know, my name’s Steve, I’m the Director of Football at Bayside, and this is Joe [nods his head], the assistant manager. Me and Joe are looking to replicate the success we’ve had over the last few years, and those who are returning will know how much hard work has to be put in. We are expecting you all to work hard. Some of your faces I can see now won’t last, that is fine. Just ask the boys who have been here a long time, they know how hard you have to work and I know some of you won’t be able to last. All I ask is that when we train, you try to be the best in your group; the best defender; the best attacker; the best player. Nothing more from me but I will hopefully start to see a bit more of some of you as the sessions roll on. Joe?” Joe nods his head. He pauses for a moment, arms folded, scanning the sea of faces. He continues, “Just to reiterate Steve, let’s get to work and start building for this year. Put the work in, we will be watching you closely. Clive, Seb, take them for a warm up, 10 minutes and you are back in with Bobby for the rest of your warm-up.”

4.2 “He’s not quite there for me”: The ‘play well’ code

The first and most recognizable of the codes was the ‘play well’ code. This facet related to the evaluation of an individual’s performance on-the-field. The players were aware of the formal rules of football and were provided instructions (from coaches) regarding how to play,
but the matches themselves were, in Garfinkel’s terms, unique and indexical (see Chapter 3.5.4 for further explanation); that is, bound to the context and constructed in each match all over again. Thus, to ‘play well’ was fundamental to any individual who strived for longevity at Bayside; that is, by way of selection for matches (“starting”). To ‘play well’ then, was an on-going accomplishment exhibited through team selection. The importance of ‘good performances’ was critical given the number of available players at Bayside surpassed the places possible within the match day squad (16) and the starting team (11). A perceived high level of performance (both in training and games) was, therefore, rewarded with time on the playing field. For example – “Jake isn’t playing well… I need to take Jake off” – was reflective of an interpretation that he (Jake) must ‘play well’ (or play ‘better’) to justify time on the field.

Taking this into consideration, all the players at Steve’s disposal were deemed to have, or be capable of, reaching a particular standard of play. In a reflective process, Steve and Joe would base selection choices upon training, matches and previous performances. This required players to consistently ‘play well’ whenever the opportunity arose. The weekly flow of matches displayed a hierarchy of those players who were deemed to be currently ‘playing well’ and, accordingly, warranted selection. The following example highlighted an agreement that specific standards of performance existed. For Bayside, a customary game of ‘keep-ball’ was often played during their training session warm-ups. The game involved players forming a circle around two defenders who tried to win the ball back. An intercepted pass (a mistake) from one of the surrounding players initiated a change with the pair in-the-middle. This circle was deemed an exhibition of skill for players, where successful tricks, flicks and passes received praise. The game, in play, was a local exhibition of the need to ‘play well’:
“Last pair mounted,” Steve barks. The players rush to find partners. Rhys and Callum spin frantically, but all their team-mates are taken; they start in the middle. The players immediately intercept a pass from Ceri. Steve interrupts, “No, no, no…that isn’t a good enough start. Think about where you are playing the pass, suck them in, little short ones then play it out. Next two in the middle,” he looks incensed at the mistake.

Will and others lean forward slightly, bouncing on their toes. Steve counts the passes as play begins. Ceri leaps towards Floyd but the ball is stabbed between Ceri’s outstretched leg. “MEGS!” is the cry from the crowd. The players jump for joy. The ball continues, “30…31…32” Steve counts, his tone changes; he becomes more and more excited as the ball exchanges from player to player. Woody starts to look tired. “Work hard in the middle!” a smug call from the side. Ceri surges to the other side. The ball flies through his legs, again. “MEGS!” the surrounding players howl. Woody stands in disbelief, “What the fuck are you doing? Why did I get stuck with him!?” He mutters.

Ceri begins a last charge towards Steve. Steve glances to his right and rolls the ball to his left. “MEGS!” he shouts, “MEGS!” the surrounding players fall to the floor with laughter. Ceri and Woody are stunned into silence. Woody rubs his face and throws his arms in the air, “What are you doing, you mug?” he groans. “That will do,” Steve calls out. He turns to Ceri as the others leave, “Don’t worry Ceri, I’ve done it to better players”.

The reaction above exemplified an expectation for the players to maintain certain standards of performance (i.e., not to ‘lose’ the ball). Although team selection was not directly linked to this game, the example highlights an expected level of performance and a continued failure to adhere would lead to an individual being tarnished with a lack of competency, and accordingly, risk de-selection. Such levels of expectation were co-constructed by the coaching staff and players. Rhys, the team captain, illustrates this in the following quote:

Interview extract [February 2nd 2015]

Rhys: “The team really is cut-throat when you think about what players will say to each other. Take Will for example. Players constantly take the piss out of his touch or say he can’t pass. The other day we watched the rezzies (reserve team) play and Woody goes, ‘Hey Will if we go far in the cup you better start looking for your touch otherwise thousands are going to see how shit you are’. Everyone laughed but that is ruthless really considering they are team mates. Thing is, it gets passed off as banter, taking the piss out of each other. You really have to be pretty thick skinned; especially when it comes to playing; you can’t let it affect you! You have to be good enough to play. Everyone knows that; you’ve just got to back yourself that you are good enough to play. If you’re not, go play for Bobby in the 2’s.”
Despite agreement that players had to adhere to performance standards, the variation from each performance and each player meant that to define ‘playing well’ exactly was not always clear cut from the coaches. To ‘play well’ condensed the details of the coaches’ evaluations and so it was a blanket for the subsequent evaluation; that is, the description of ‘playing well’ did not necessarily cover in words the coaches’ interpretations of the performance. This was because to ‘play well’ was contextually detailed and found in, of and as every part of that diagnosis. Thus, to form their evaluations, the coaches identified specific features of a good performance which required an act of ‘seeing’ in-action. ‘Seeing’ referred to the socially constructed evaluation of what was considered to be a good performance through making public the observable features of that performance. Although anyone could watch and evaluate any match (or training), an act of ‘seeing’ (aligned with the coaches of Bayside) might not be possible to the untrained eye. Hence, to be defined as ‘playing well’ at Bayside, was to act in accordance with the coaches’ wishes. The post-game team-talk offered below indicated what the coaches had ‘seen’, in contradiction to what was expected during the game:

Field note extract [November 1st 2014]

[2-1. Bayside has lost. Their opponents were a notoriously unpopular team situated in the middle of a housing estate. The players fill the cramped dressing room. Rain shatters down on the tin roof. Stale red paint curls away from the walls.]

Seb scratches mud from his boots. Rain drips from his brow; steam radiates from his head like smoke. “Fuck,” Callum shouts. He slams his boots on the cold concrete floor. The noise bounces around the cramped room... [BANG!] Steve crashes the door open. He shuffles from left to right, rubbing his head “Some of you have really let yourselves down today! What I don’t understand is why we seemed so surprised when they shelled it forward; we knew they were going to do that. The messages were there; we had to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty... [Short pause] But some of you don’t want to do that. When you come to a place like this you have to do the basics; you have to win second balls, don’t let men run off you, mark correctly and keep the ball, simple passes. You don’t get given anything, you have to take it. I tell you now, that is why none of you will make it [professional]... [Short pause] Seb, awful today, you were going on about how shit their 5 is before the game. Better than you today because you were fucking shit,
at least he took two touches... [Short pause] Callum, we asked you to tuck in to help Tom out, but you couldn’t do that, why couldn’t you do that? You played in straight lines; an absolute disgrace. Joe”. The players gawk at the floor. Joe steps forward, his movements are slow and deliberate; disappointment fills his face. “If you are going to give a team 45 minutes and a 2-0 lead then you're always going to struggle... [Long pause] Now this isn't an ability thing here we are talking about. We have ability and talent in abundance. You know how we scored?... [Long pause] We applied a bit of pressure to the dopey 4, but in the 89th minute it’s too late. Steve is right, if you don’t want to get your hands dirty, do the graft, win the second balls and have some arsehole to actually get the ball down, move it quickly and play then that is fine. That is fine by me. That is fine by Steve. I have no problem with that. If that is the case you just have to come up to me face-to-face and say ‘nope, not for me anymore, can’t do it’. I won’t think any less of you. I’ll just go and find someone who will do it for me,” Joe turns back to leave with Steve. Dave clutches his clipboard, his tone of voice is more sympathetic as he sits by Seb and scribbles lines across the paper.

Half-time and full-time (of the matches) provided Steve and Joe natural breaks to address the players. In this example, the information provided before, during and after the match by the coaches’ made accountable the expectation, and subsequently, the specific criteria they utilised to ‘see’ the performances. An infinite number of possible incidents could have been discussed, yet the coaches were consistent with their original team-talk. What was deemed to be critical included features such as ‘second balls’, ‘checking shoulders’ and ‘applying pressure’. Undoubtedly more ‘objective’ features could have been highlighted (e.g., the final score, the goal scorer), but the coaches’ diagnosis was led by the instructions (‘messages’) provided prior to the game. In essence, the coaches’ pre-game talk guided the players regarding ‘how to play’, or more appropriately ‘how Bayside wanted to play’. That information formed the criteria for what the coaches would ‘see’. Despite each performance being unique, the information and lay-advice provided by the coaches indicated what was expected of the players and, consequently, what would be ‘seen’ and how the players would be judged.

What the coaches’ had ‘seen’ influenced their subsequent feedback and selection choices. An ability to ‘see’ a performance was specific to each coach and so, an
intersubjective understanding of what a ‘good’ performance looked like was continually negotiated. This understanding was only possible through extensive interactional work by both coaches. The following extract underlined Steve’s appreciation for shared critical thinking with Joe:

Field note extract [December 11th 2014]

Steve and I meet by the pitch prior to training. We begin discussing some tactics regarding the team we are playing Saturday. I remind him of the gangly striker [known as an attacking player in football] they have. He is relaxed, more so than when the whole squad are there. I follow while Steve methodically places cones. "Me and Joe work together. I have known him for a while; he knows his stuff when it comes to football. I used to ask him what he thought of us (Bayside) whenever he came and watched. Then, about 3 years ago he joined as the assistant. He is great tactically, thinks about the game in different ways. He has also been around the level (of Bayside) a lot more than me, so he knows what the players are like and the struggles we have, like Saturday". We both smile. Steve continues, "We can then bounce ideas off each other. I’ll give you an example: ever since I started coaching I always watch the games on the left corner of the box (technical area for coaches) and Joe will stand on the right corner. We won’t speak to each other through the game, maybe a few words, then if I see something happening that needs changing I can ask him or we usually have a quick chat before the players come in (for half-time). Saturday for example, we weren’t getting the ball out the back very well and we both agreed just before we said our piece to the players at half-time. It helps so we can support what we are saying."

To ensure the coaches’ agreed on what was expected of the players, they met several times a week to reflect, plan and discuss previous performances. This co-operation enabled them to establish some consistency regarding instructions and what had been ‘seen’. Such interactions were the source of how the coaches identified and analysed the specific (and continuous) features in relation to player performances. The extract below illustrates descriptors of performance the coaches deliberated over prior to making selection choices:

Field note extract [January 9th 2015]

[Steve and Joe meet for a coffee, only an elderly couple occupy a table in the corner. We find a couple of big armchairs on the opposite side of the café.]

“Charlie, get the latte’s in would you... you never buy!” Steve and Joe smile. Both coaches simultaneously slide back in their seats, legs crossed smirking. Steve waits a
moment and grows more unsettled, fidgeting in his seat, “We have a real decision to make Joe.” He begins, waiting for Joe’s full attention, “Should we go with Callum up front? He’s scored some crucial goals recently, but fuck me; he is a lazy bastard at times. When he plays, he is a goal threat but he just doesn’t want to stretch the game. He waits and waits; it means others around him have to do all his running. And then when he does get it he doesn’t want to take a bump and hold it [the ball] up”. Joe looks calmer; he sips his coffee before replying, “Perhaps he doesn’t have to stretch the game to be effective. We use Alex and Floyd to move the game up the pitch. He just has to get onto things. I still think he can stretch the game. When he is firing he is deadly”. Steve pauses before replying, “I do agree… but when he isn’t, it breaks down on him. I think we should consider going with Lewys. At least you know he will take a bump for you and hold the ball up, you know? I think he asks questions of the defenders, he can occupy two at once which helps isolate Alex and Floyd”. Steve and Joe continued to discuss other aspects of recent performances.

The coaches’ deliberations over an ability to ‘stretch the game’ was a requirement based on the premise that a ‘striker’, the furthest player on the team from the defending goal, should make movements towards the opponent’s goal in an attempt to draw defenders and create opportunities for players behind him. This action occurred away from the ball and, therefore, required the coaching staff to ‘see’ the player ‘stretching the game’. For Lewys and Callum, the descriptor offered by the coaches formed an element of how they would be evaluated, and consequently, influenced the decision to select them or not. This is not to claim the coaches’ were normative regarding the act of seeing; that is, ‘seeing’ for each coach was a contextual interpretation in light of their expectations of what a ‘good performance’ was (i.e., ‘stretching the game’ among other descriptors). As such, each coach’s account of what had been ‘seen’ needed to be collaboratively stitched together in a way that was coherent with, and for, the other. Hence, the visual and physical act of what the coaches had ‘seen’ could only be understood once they presented their account in a coherent interaction to the other coach (or athlete). In doing so, through making what they had ‘seen’ accountable, the coaches’ observations were made clear through the interaction. And so, through identifying common features, like ‘stretching the game’, the coaches understood and highlighted a feature of ‘playing well’, and thus, agreement for the landscape of a good performance was created.
Despite the coaches’ collaborative efforts above, the process of reifying what was ‘seen’ (or expected) was often a heated and contested one, encumbered with conflict when different descriptors were valued (seen). The following dialogue highlighted how, when recalling a match, the coaches provided snippets of their observations which then formed the basis of their evaluations. This work was a constant feature of the coaches’ reflections and discussions regarding performances:

Field note extract [September 13th 2014]

[The bar after the game is busy but all the players have left. I sit with Joe and Steve whilst they enjoy a beer and discuss the performance.]

Joe: “It’s a good result but to think we went 1-0 down. We can’t have that!”

Steve: “That dopey 6 picked up the second ball and played a diag over Will’s head.”

Joe: “I think Richard should have been off his line.”

Steve: “You can’t ask him to be that far off his line, don’t you think there should have been more pressure on the ball. We lost the second ball remember. Jamie should be doing more to stop that switch as well.”

Joe: “No Richard needs to start off his line, read it a bit earlier. Then he can come and take that ball and take the pressure off. It is no different from Zach last year, we expected him to do the same.”

Steve: “Yeah but Jamie has to do everything he can to stop the long switch. Full backs are in the team to stop crosses. That is what he is there for, don’t worry about getting forward. You have to stop it at source.”

Joe: “Richard should have a better starting position; he should have smelt the danger”

Steve: “You can’t blame Richard. Rhys and Will, along with Jamie, could have dealt with the ball better.”

Steve’s favourite professional team are losing to the league leader. His attention is diverted.

Unsurprisingly, the whole game could not be remembered by each coach. Thus, the coaches’ identification and deconstruction of performances hinged upon the specific features they
identified within the critical incidences. What descriptors had been ‘seen’ were therefore crucial to inform their judgements of the performances, and so, variation between the coaches was common. That said, the coaches attempted to evaluate performances without bias in a process of ‘objectification’; that is, the coaches accounts presented their observations of ‘what really happened’ or ‘what should have happened’ in a way that their accounts portrayed exactly what had occurred in terms of one that any other would have ‘seen’. The inter-relationship between accounts was a continual effort to ‘make sense’, and to teach the other more about what had been ‘seen’ and what could be learnt. In doing so, each coach built upon, contested, and developed the other’s interpretation, as well as their own. In this way, their collective efforts marked an attempt to create an ‘objective’ agreement regarding what occurred in the performance. The result was an intersubjective cogent account of events. The accounts formed the basis of what would then be presented to the players at a later date (i.e., the ‘messages’ and feedback) regarding who had ‘played well’. The interaction and co-operation required for each account provided security for the coaches’ prior to sharing their evaluations and potentially de-selecting a player not ‘seen’ to be ‘playing well’.

4.3 “He’s one of us”: The ‘fitting-in’ code

Maintaining the perception of ‘playing well’ was of paramount importance for each player’s team selection. To add to the complexity of what was seen, the players were required to ‘fit’ within a structure (e.g., tactical formation). Joe described football as “relational”, and consequently, he would often advocate a good performance to those surrounding any particular individual. For instance, Joe advocated that Clive’s positional sense was the reason that “allowed Alex to play”. He would thus ‘see’ Alex ‘playing well’ as a result of Clive’s contribution. In the coaches’ eyes, like an orchestra, the musicians (players) had to competently execute all the notes required at that particular time in the song. Each musician
(player) had to play sufficiently well to be heard (seen), whilst each individual could not overstep their performance and stop the other instruments or musicians being heard. The individual was a part of the whole and, therefore, could be replaced by another (i.e., team selection), although this may require a different song (formation) to be played. With that in mind, the coaches believed they knew what a good performance was that required the team to shape a ‘collective sound’ (Sennett, 2012); that is, the players’ work could only be deemed ‘good’ when they produced collective, or in this case, team success. This emphasis from the coaching staff meant a second facet of the codes was known as ‘fitting-in’. The unity and compliance required of individuals here meant that the maxim did not refer solely to the individual performance, but to their contribution to the whole on and off the field.

The daily routines at Bayside varied little from week to week. Players were required to comply with the schedule organised by the staff. Uncooperative players, demanding unnecessary time and interest from the coaching staff were considered as disrupting the order. Phil, for example, was a player who arrived at Bayside towards the end of pre-season (August). The coaches were excited at Phil’s arrival. However, in his first few weeks attendance was intermittent and he often arrived late for training sessions and meetings. The coaching staff and players quickly tarnished Phil with having an ‘attitude’ and questioned his commitment to the team. Phil’s inability to read the social landscape and fully integrate himself with the players and coaching staff (i.e. to ‘fit-in’) was referred to by the latter as “buying into the programme”. The coaches defined this as “what we do, and how we do it”, and thus, playing for Bayside encompassed more than an explicit affiliation (e.g., facilities, coaching practice and kit), but an implicit shared club ethos: something that included; (1) a high degree of commitment; (2) a good work ethic; (3) and a maintenance of respect and humility. Consequently, a dualism was identified within this code; that is, players were
required to ‘fit’ in terms of their performance, but also, players should socially ‘fit’ the environment through being considered one of the ‘team’.

The dyad identified here was illustrated through Will’s journey within the team. Both Will and Jamie joined Bayside during pre-season having previously played for King’s Town FC (a pseudonym). The ‘King’s’ played in a higher league than Bayside and both players had previously been labelled as exceptional young talents. The coaching staff expressed excitement about the prospect of the two promising young players. Will, in particular, was more unorthodox than Jamie and his technique less fluid than some of the existing players. However, soon after he arrived, Will quickly achieved the status of having the right ‘attitude’. Will’s value to the team was epitomised by the exchange below:

Field note extract [December 4th 2014]

[Rhys, the club captain, meets with Steve after training. The meeting begins with administration duties for the upcoming league game but the conversation quickly changes topic.]

Steve: “Did you see Will’s feet in the square today? He has come on so far since we got him.”

Rhys: “He has done well.”

Steve: “Who would have thought ‘Klunk’ could keep the ball like that?” ‘Klunk’ was a whimsical name Steve used to describe Will. The name was intended to highlight the improvements Will had made under Steve’s management.

Rhys: “I have to say, I love playing with Will, he has come on a lot and he is a top bloke. No shit with him, just gets on with it and he is a competitor. He won’t let anyone get past him.”

Steve: “I agree, I don’t think he is as dominant as Anthony used to be in air, we all know what he could do, he could head it almost as far as me…[short pause] but Will is a better defender; at actually defending. He listens to the instructions given, tries to take them on and he is starting to show how far he has come.”

Rhys: “Yeah considering he is so young, he really has slotted in. I don’t think he has missed a training session actually, and he always pays his fines; you can’t argue with that!”
Steve and Rhys’s agreement regarding Will’s engagement valued his playing ability, but their descriptors also included the importance of compliance. Beneath this compliance, however, lay a paradox; that is, performance requirements and personal attributes were an individual requisite, but to ‘play well’ could only be achieved through the other players, and so, any individual had to ‘fit’ with those around them. ‘Fitting-in’ was integral to performance on the field. The two codes interlocked and were mutually supportive. If strained, the codes entangled to create a tension for the coaches’ selection decisions. In contrast to Will, Jamie struggled to achieve the perception among the coaches and players of ‘fitting-in’. In spite of the coaches marking Jamie as a ‘good player’, his disengagement with training and advice meant Jamie was perceived as not making the required effort to be a part of the club. The following extract indicates the relationship between these two codes in Jamie’s case:

**Field note extract [September 21st 2015]**

The players arrive in the dressing room at half-time; some red-faced. The players sniff and gulp water waiting for Steve to speak, “Look at you, some of you aren’t even sweating. If you think that was good enough, you’ve got no chance. Especially you Jamie. I don’t care who you have played for, you’re playing for Bayside now and that means playing the Bayside way. Two touches, move the ball fast. You can’t keep losing the ball when you dribble with it... you want to look great but you can’t get away with that here. If you can’t do it, I’ll replace you with someone who will”. Jamie stares at the floor, disinterested. The surrounding players shuffle and sniff awkwardly. Others expect more from him, but he doesn’t seem to know. He doesn’t seem to care.

At the end of the game, the players meet in the bar and begin discussing the match, “Oi Will! What’s wrong with Jamie? Where is he now? Gone home again?” Richard smirks. Will shrugs his shoulders, pushing the food around his plate. Richard probes a bit further, “He hasn’t been training much, needs to enjoy his life a bit more I reckon”. Will hesitates, then replies, “hmm...I suppose so, I’ve never bothered with him. He is quite big-time. Thinks he is better than the team”. The players around the table pause; they look frustrated. Rhys rolls his eyes.

The coaches, in Joe’s words, initially let Jamie “find his own way within the club”. Both coaches worked to get him to ‘fit-in’ and endeavoured to re-establish order through offering support and sympathy. Despite Jamie returning the attention with the occasional good
performance and gaining a degree of respect, his failure to balance the dualism of ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’ meant he followed a declining trajectory within the hierarchy of the club. Jamie’s aloofness and disengagement from the team (and coaches) led to his eventual resignation. Both coaches recognised and accepted the importance of the athletes’ involvement in creating and adhering to the ‘fitting-in’ code, meaning the engagement with Jamie was temporally bound. In Jamie’s case, a failure to maintain the routine and engagement shown by the other players, meant frustration and disapproval of his actions developed within the dressing room. Taking this into consideration, the coaches would often inquire about “how the boys felt?” through carefully probing particular individuals. In doing so, they constructed an illusion of co-operation between coach and athlete. In the following dialogue, Steve and Joe consulted Rhys, the club captain, prior to making a selection decision:

*Field note extract [January 2nd 2015]*

[Training resumes after a short Christmas break. Steve and Joe are eager to get back into the routine. They invite Rhys and me to the clubhouse after training.]

Steve and Joe wish the remaining few players a Happy New Year while Rhys and I sit looking slightly uncomfortable. They have engineered the discussion.

Steve: “Have you spoken to Don or Tom (two ex-Bayside players)? You have probably heard that we are in talks with them about coming back next year. I don’t think either are having a great time at their respective clubs and they are looking to come back. Well… Joe and I spoke and we are considering the possibility of getting them back early, not just for next season but to come play now. Thickening up the squad for the remainder of the season would mean we have a luxury of players to choose from. Callum, Alex, Floyd and then add in Don and Tom. We would be frightening. My only concern is the effect it may have on someone like Floyd. He would more than likely be the player to miss out. He may find himself 3rd in line despite starting the last 6 games. What would that do for his confidence? And then what about someone like Sam in the 2nds, what would he think? I’ve based this club on working with what we have. Given our recent success I don’t think that should change. If the two boys come back then they are blocking or potentially stunting the development of other lads… [Steve pauses sipping his drink] You have to remember with Alex coming back from injury and Callum close to being back; we go from 3 strikers to 5. That makes a big difference.”

Rhys and I nod simultaneously. I dare not break the silence first.
Joe: “I’ve been toying with the idea that if Tom and Don are coming back, why not get them back for the last 10 games of the season. We are in a close and contested run in for the title and I think those two as addition could really make the difference. Help secure it, I think. But yes, I agree that if the players come back they may act as blockers, but if we are successful with the title, we move up a league again which will naturally pull the players who miss out this season up and up. What do you think?”

Rhys pauses, he glances at me. He sighs and scrunches his face; he spends a few moments considering his reply.

Rhys: “It’s a difficult decision” He hesitates, “I am happy for them to come back I guess... [short pause] But I can imagine that it wouldn’t be as nice for Alex or Floyd to then have further competition. It’s your decision but it’s a pretty cut throat business and I suppose the best players play but as long as I’ve been at the club the we have always worked with what we have and brought players through the ranks so in that sense they shouldn’t come back. Then again, they have played for the club before so getting them back in wouldn’t be as complicated. I think things have moved on since they were here. We have memories and good jokes, but it is different now.”

The example illustrated the value placed upon a co-operative environment by both the coaches and players. The importance given to ‘fitting-in’ was crucial to Steve and Joe’s construction of ‘good decisions’ regarding the team, as well as performances. As a result, the coaches continuously negotiated the tension between managing individual performances to ‘play well’ whilst ensuring the players ‘fitted’ together on and off the field.

In addition, the value players placed upon ‘fitting-in’ away from the coaching staff was further highlighted by a shared ‘fines’ system. Here, three ‘senior’ players formed a committee which charged (“fined”) individuals for behaviour outside the norms. Such misconduct included ‘dirty boots’, ‘lateness’, ‘poor performances’ and ‘inappropriate clothing’. Phil’s lackadaisical approach to training and games was subject to several fines within his first few weeks at the club. His eventual compliance, along with other players, was praised by the committee. Although their efforts rarely stretched further than the occasional joke when it came to the coaching staff, Joe believed; “the fines system is good, I think. The players police themselves and discipline themselves behind closed doors. Steve and I can’t be there the whole time so this is a good thing”. The structure of the ‘fines’ system contributed
to the compliance of the players. ‘Fitting-in’ then was in relation to the club and not just individually playing.

4.4 “I only play for the dressing room, sometimes”: A brotherhood

The following maxim was directly linked to, and somewhat a result of, the ‘fitting-in’ code. In all its guises and vagueness, the ‘brotherhood’ code principally concerned the relationships between the players. The interrelated connection between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’ meant that successfully adhering to both codes resulted in a sense of “we are in this together”. Such a feeling was most apparent following a “hard win”, where the players were able to rejoice as a team in the dressing room. This is not to say the ‘brotherhood’ was only apparent following a victory. Rather, the maxim was a combination of the players’ shared experiences at Bayside, positive and negative.

The players spent large proportions of their time at Bayside away from the coaches’ gaze which contributed to the overall workings of the club. Whilst Steve and Joe were the gatekeepers for new players joining, the dressing room was a potentially daunting environment. This was because some players had spent a large proportion of their careers at Bayside, and therefore, maintained and shaped the conduct required away from the coaches. For instance, during the opening weeks of the season, a theft of kit occurred. The players rounded on the young thief and imposed their own collective punishment. The coaches were not made aware until after the event and were not required to intervene. The example highlighted the players’ willingness to ensure the dressing room remained a respected sanctuary. Thus, the dressing room maintained the expectancies of ‘fitting-in’ through preserving its own social rules. In the case of the thief, the players reinforced and maintained the importance of upholding a respected and safe dressing room. Albeit through humour, in the subsequent weeks after the
event, the players reiterated the importance of the social rule by not letting the thief’s actions go unforgotten.

The previous two codes were essential for good performances and to warrant selection, however, the brotherhood was an extension upon this requirement. The ‘brotherhood’ for all its guises was an important facet of playing for Bayside. It was an often taken-for-granted feature of the players’ commitment. The intensity of the ‘brotherhood’ was sourced and maintained through being a part of the ‘team’. After all, players who could not reach the expected standards of performance could not survive at the football club. The following extract gives an example of the ‘brotherhood’ in action:

*Field note extract [October 7th 2014]*

*The rain lashes down on the roof of the dressing room. At half-time Bayside are tied 1-1 in a derby with a local team.*

The second half gets under way. I feel good; a few tackles; a few passes. I win a free kick which we convert. 2-1. I’ve contributed. We reset with 30 minutes left. My heart pumps in my neck. “Get the ball back; you’ve got to get the ball back,” I whisper… *[BANG]* I fly into a tackle. The whistle blows. “No way!! That wasn’t a foul”. The opposing player grabs and spins the ball out in front. A quick free-kick and we are in trouble. I spring to the right to stop the play. The whistle blows again. It dawns on me that I already have a yellow. I’m in trouble here. I hold my hands up, “Sorry ref,” he shakes his head; ex-copper. “No chance I could get out the way.” I can hear the screams from the opposition bench. He shakes his head, “You stuck your leg out, you’re gone”. Reaching into his front pocket he grabs a yellow card and then slides a red one from behind. His arm casts a shadow over my head. I scuttle to the bench. The crowd looks triple in size. Steve glares at me, “Don’t you fucking dare come here you idiot; you’re not welcome!” His words cripple me. The crowd’s taunting adds to my desolation. Guilt rushes through my stomach, what have I done?

I watched the remainder of the game peering from the side of the stand. Full-time. 3-1. They had done it. The players hug and smile; I dare not get too close. The fence around the pitch separates me from the team. Steve is blunt, “Huge well done, we will chat inside”. The players leave and before long only Joe is left in the dug-out. He walks past me. He knows; I know. I stare at the floor but he grabs my head and pulls it up. “Don’t worry; it’s happened. Take your punishment and learn from it”, he whispers and quickly catches up with the others.

I scarper back to the dressing room. The players are waiting. My seat is taken; I’ll sit in the corner for now. Clive comes and sits next to me, he puts his arm around my shoulder.
“I’ll take the blame mate, I shouted stand on it,” he says. My eyes raise. “No, seriously, Steve went mad at me on the side-line for saying it. Blaming me for the incident.” I pause for a moment, “I’m off the hook then”. Clive bursts into laughter. Steve enters, “Fantastic performance today and a fantastic result. The way we defended with 10 men was fantastic, the application and commitment. I can’t fault you… [long pause] If there is one sour note, and there is,” Steve pauses and stares at me, “Charlie, if you were at a pro club I’d fine you a week’s wages, downright stupid what you did out there. You’re supposed to be a bright lad; you need to thank your teammates tonight because they got you out the shit. You owe us one.” I nod in agreement. He leaves and chatter resumes.

Seb taps me on his way to the shower, “Steve was a bit harsh on you there,” he says, “he didn’t have to do that in front of everyone”. Seb is privy to a berating from Steve; he has been on the end of a few.

The reaction by Steve was evoked due to a breaking of the previous two codes. The players’ willingness to share the blame illustrated a sanctuary within the ‘dressing room’, in other words, a ‘brotherhood’. Such support provided by Seb and Clive was observed in more subtle forms without breaking one of the codes. For example, the uncertainty posed by the coaches’ selection and evaluations of performances meant players’ would draw upon their fellow team-mates to help understand and make sense of the coaches’ actions. The following extract evidences the solidarity players provided to each other within the dressing room:

Field note extract [January 24th 2015]

[Danny returned to the dressing room. He sits between Alex and me.]

“Fuck sake, I was shit today… [Long pause] I was shit, what do you think?” Danny announced with an air of pity, rocking forward into his hands. Alex leaps forward wrestling with his socks. He pauses before consoling Danny, “You weren’t bad mate, don’t worry about it. He [Steve] was really tough on you today. They played high wingers and we didn’t have any so you were left exposed. Keep your chin up. Got the win didn’t we,” Alex replies.

Later Danny sits in the corner of the club house. He looks distraught as he turns to Callum, “don’t you think we are exposed by not having wingers. It leaves me so open if they pick up the ball, no one in front of me like”. Callum nods, “not sure about the formation myself,” he adds.

The previous two codes required a large investment from individuals, while the competitive environment did not always return such an input. In other words, poor performances, physical
fatigue, a contested environment and anxiety over results equated to a level of suffering. The brotherhood’s collegial importance allowed for a shared pain. As such, the ‘brotherhood’ provided a more intricate level of ‘buy-in’ between the players. The players appreciated their footballing success was bound to each other and the following example demonstrates the players’ appreciation for such a bond. In the latter part of the season, Seb expressed ambitions to move higher within the football pyramid that meant his continued commitment to the club hinged upon promotion for Bayside. In this crucial period, the following extract was taken from a private online forum which only the players had access to. Entry to the forum was only possible through invitation by club captain (Rhys). The forum was predominantly used for squad selection, news, results and training times. However, on this occasion, Seb’s strategy was to use the intimacy of the forum to express his thoughts to the team in an attempt to galvanise the players:

Field note extract [April 6th 2015]

[Extract taken from an online chat posted following a loss with five games until the end of the season.]

Lads,
Just wanted to say we were unlucky yesterday. Every single one of us played well and we played well collectively. It just didn't quite go for us on the day. Let's forget about yesterday, get our heads up and go and win this fucking league. We've done it the hard way before and we can do it again. We are far too good not to win it, and we need to believe that going into the last 5 games!

Unlike · Comment

Spot on! Have to all believe it's possible going into the last 5 games. If we dominate games like we did yesterday I'm confident things will go our way!

Yesterday at 11:38am · Like · 1
Seb’s comments above were an attempt to galvanise the team as a strategy to improve performance. That said, the depth of the brotherhood was not universal. Rather, the brotherhood was contextual and bound to specific individuals. This is not to downplay the importance of the brotherhood, but to recognise the contested and competitive environment of football. Therefore, the connections between players (and coaches) were not shared equally among the team. The brotherhood was confined to pockets; that is, ‘cliques’ of players within the team. Although a web connected all the players and staff alike, certain connections were much stronger than others. The following extract highlights the tenderness of this web. Lewys’ sincere comments emphasised the bonds he formed between certain individuals; not everyone was included:

*Field note extract [May 30th 2015]*

[Lewys, Woody, Rhys and I go to a local bar to watch the F.A cup final. The last game of the season has been played.]

Lewys brings his drink over from the bar. He looks unhappy, troubled, “I don’t know what it is man, end of seasons are always shit; we celebrate but I hate the end of the season. No more football, I’m lost. I don’t know what to do with myself and it feels like you don’t even know the people you have been with the last 9 months. Take Alex, I sit next to him all year, I always fuck around with him at training and matches but I haven’t spoken to him since the season has finished... [Long pause] I suppose without football you have no reason to see them... [Long pause] I don’t know just a strange feeling and I suppose you never really know who will turn up in the summer. It’s class seeing everyone again but no doubt a few lads will go elsewhere. All starts again.” The others nod their heads and stare at the big screen. A moment of reflection follows.

4.5 “The club needs someone in charge”: Respecting space

The fourth code identified related to the roles occupied by the individuals at Bayside. This axiom was in reference to the ‘space’ or ‘position’ each person occupied; that is, the role, values and contribution of each individual to the club. The continual negotiation between matches and training meant there was a continuous movement in and out of the team, and so,
individuals were always striving to solidify their position (space) within it. For instance, the space I occupied throughout the fieldwork included maintaining performances as a first team player whilst assisting with the daily running of the club. These included undertaking tasks such as, organising paperwork, arriving earlier to prepare sessions, meeting with the coaching staff, providing players’ lifts, and even driving the mini-bus.

On the other hand, the coaching staff occupied a different space to the players, spending a significant proportion of their time at the club away from the team, even on training and match days. On match days, for example, the coaching staff would leave the players to prepare following their pre-match team-talk. This physical difference in space was engineered by the coaches, with such actions contributing to a division between the coaching staff and the players. When questioned about this division, Joe explained:

*Interview extract [August 14th 2014]*

Joe: “Sometimes you need to be in charge, the players need someone to lead them forward, so sometimes I create distance between the boys. I want the players to take ownership, it’s their game after all but they have to respect I will be making the decisions but I can’t be with them all the time”

The distance referred to by Joe was not just physical, like the act of leaving the dressing room, but was also a fictitious space that allowed the coaches’ the authority to make decisions. Thus, the ‘space’ between coaches and players was imperative to continually operate together.

The environment was contested which meant the players were encouraged to develop their value within the club; that is, to be a ‘regular’ or ‘the best player’. In doing so, the coaching staff required contribution from the players in the form of performances (play well) and compliance (fitting-in). However, should a player fail to adhere to the expectancies, their space within the team became disrupted. This meant individuals were not always compliant and accepting of their then occupied space. Managing ‘space’ was, therefore, an on-going but
potentially contentious issue. In the following extract, Richard, a respected player for Bayside, who had recently cemented a place in the first team, jeopardised his own position through questioning the coaching staff. In so doing, he disrupted the order:

Field note extract [July 17th 2014]

[Pre-season, week two. Steve and Joe are yet to clearly define who will be involved in the first team compared to the second team.]

Joe stops the session to address one of the groups. He offers a demonstrations of the movement, meanwhile Hamish shuffles towards Richard and whispers “Mate, fed up of this, I reckon we should split 1’s and 2’s now. The quality in the session is shit. What do you reckon? Think we should say something?” Richard nods, “I agree mate, we can’t string two passes together at the moment” he replies.

Richard strides towards Joe in-between the transition of drills, “Joe, I think we should consider splitting the groups up so we can raise the quality… [Short pause] Keep those who aren’t sure of staying happy”. Joe looks in disgust; he pauses and considers Richard’s comments. Joe then shakes his head and replies, “I don’t agree! Who isn’t happy? If they don’t want to stay, they can leave now! I’m not interested in keeping people happy!” Joe quickly turns and calls for the rest of the players’ attentions. He looks angered, Richard is left on the side of the circle. “If any of you have an issue with the way things are being run, I suggest you speak now! I will justify my actions to any one of you and if you don’t want to stay, you can leave. Now Richard has mentioned some of you think we should split the group up, does anyone have anything to add?… [Long pause] Hamish, anything?” Joe glares at Hamish. Hamish shuffles his feet side to side staring at the floor, “Ummm, I get that it isn’t easy to split the groups”. Richard knows what’s coming and quickly interrupts, “well… I just mentioned it to raise the quality”. Joe responds before he can continue, “Whatever standard you play at, there will be a difference in ability”. Hamish nods and adds, “I think we need to raise the quality amongst ourselves lads, we all started at some place. We need to pull together… Yeah?” Joe nods, “So it’s done, let’s get back to work”. Joe turns and continues walking to his next drill. Hamish scuttles over to the grid set up.

Here, despite Richard’s increasing value as a player the extract highlights the importance of recognising boundaries. Consequently, Joe’s actions indicated a need to diminish Richard’s space. In doing so, Hamish quickly deserted Richard in fear of being perceived as undermining the coach (resisting). Joe berating Richard was a reminder for the group of his authority to make decisions regarding Bayside’s training. Richard and Hamish’s subsequent compliance endorsed this understanding.
Following the event, Hamish initiated a conversation with Richard, describing his actions as “it was only a suggestion, I just want the team to do well”. Hamish was aware of the damage resisting Joe could cause and, consequently, Hamish’s approach to Richard confirmed he did not want to be perceived as resisting to the other players. Thus, the ‘space’ any one individual occupied at Bayside was always in flux; the players’ attempted to maintain and/or better their position. For the most part, the coaches were able to subtly persuade, divert or control any potential public acts of resistance such as Richard’s. However, a more explicit example occurred with Allan. Here, Allan, usually a reserved individual who spent the majority of the season ‘on the bench’, openly disagreed with Steve’s instruction:

*Field note extract [March 12th 2015]*

Steve sets up a match to finish. The ball gets rolled back to Allan. He lifts his leg as if he goes to play then fakes back. Callum guesses Allan’s moves and takes the ball from him. Steve instantly shouts over, “move the ball Allan!” Allan stares to the floor, “oh fuck off,” he mumbles. Steve explodes, “Get off the pitch Allan. Go and get changed, you don’t speak to me like that”. The players stand in silence, they looked bemused. “I didn’t say anything,” Allan pleads. Steve immediately screams “no one tells me to fuck off! Get off... Get off”. Allan throws his hands in the air, “I didn’t mean it at you,” he cries. The players look on silently as Allan labours off the pitch.

There was an evident respect for the hierarchy within the club, however, the acceptance of the hierarchy did not equate to unresponsive compliance Allan’s frustration, whether at Steve or not, illustrated that the players were not without opinion. In conversations resembling the coaches’ deconstruction of player performances, the players would often evaluate events occurring at Bayside. The conversation topics included; the coaches’ methods, team selection, personal performance, performances of teammates and previous performances. Away from the coaching staff then, the players expressed more opinionated interpretations than those offered in front of the coaches. The following extract provides an example of this:
Steve demands that Callum must move from his original spot for the set-piece to work. Callum nods and slowly moves in accordance with Steve’s instruction whispering under his breath, “never works anyway”. “Let’s try it again,” Steve calls. Steve’s enthusiasm does not affect the players involved who begrudgingly continue the patterned set-play. After the session, Callum and Rhys walk back to dressing rooms together. Callum expresses his discomfort, “Those corners never work; I think they are shit. How many we scored from this year? That ball in is so hard to get on the end of. He shouts if I don’t make it but half the time I have no chance”. Rhys laughs, “We don’t score many do we, and I reckon just stick in there and see what happens. I wouldn’t take it personally mate” he replies.

Conversations like the one above were frequent and illustrated the players interrogating the coaches’ decisions. At the outset, such interactions appear defiant and poisonous; however, they held a more nuanced importance than criticism of coaches and team-mates. Careful management of their space meant the players were often seeking clarity or support from their fellow teammates. The players at Bayside were constantly faced with, and frequently reminded of, an uncertainty over team selection and personal performances. Whilst the players were required to accept and respect the final decision of the coaching staff, the players support for each other provided an important ‘security net’ to buffer the coaches’ interpretations. In this regard, ‘space’ was ever-changing with team selection, and so, players sought confirmation of their own value within the dressing room. In this regard, judgements of performances from fellow team-mates were crucial to a player’s space. The following example highlights Floyd’s disagreement with what the coaches had ‘seen’ in his performances:

Field note extract [January 10th 2015]

Steve calls Floyd outside. Everyone knows but nobody looks. Floyd returns, head down. Back in his seat he whispers to Rhys, “Not starting mate. I fucking knew it. I’m fuming, can’t be arsed to sit on the bench again. They reckon Mo will stretch the game better against this lot today”. Rhys pauses, raising his eyebrows and sighs, “What did you say?” he asks. Floyd replies, “Nothing”. Rhys responds, “That’s tough on you man, you’ve done well recently. One of those things mate; stay sharp, you’ll get on and you’ll
have to show they got it wrong then,” he quickly stands to adjust his socks; sincere but preoccupied.

The players’ valued team selection and, therefore, their ‘space’ was further questioned by the addition of other players to the environment (i.e., more competition). Half way through the season a new player was invited to train, Pedro. His previous playing career had an enviable list of clubs which meant he was initially perceived to be ‘stepping down’ a level to join Bayside. The subsequent ‘space’ of particular individuals in the group became threatened by the newcomer. When confronted with the new challenge, the reaction from the players was to seek the support of those around them. The extract below exemplified a search for secondary approval from the dressing room:

Field note extract [February 5th 2015]

[Alex, Will, Rhys and I drive back from a training session. Any reflections here are often pierced with emotion from the training session.]

Alex begins, “What do you reckon to Pedro then?” A moment of silence fills the car. “He was shit mate,” Will replied. “He’s better than you,” Alex interrupts. Laughter erupts. Will smiles but continues to moan, “Fuck off lads... [Short pause] Seriously though, he’s been training a couple times, I thought he played a decent standard or something? He definitely hasn’t. Why is Steve letting him train with us? It always breaks down on him. He is a session wrecker,” Will’s frustration is compounded by more laughter from the others. Alex turns his head, “Nah, he did have some good touches but I don’t get why he gets to train, when say Danny in the 2’s doesn’t. He has been with us loads [Danny], probably fair, not Pedro”.

In this respect, the coaches emphasised the requirement to ‘fit-in’ and valued player commitment. However, new additions undermined the players’ compliance. Here, there was a paradox; that is, existing players were required to remain compliant and work towards common goals, even when not selected like Danny, but could be replaced by a new addition at any time. Respecting the team and the brotherhood controlled any egotistical outbursts in this regard.
The need to respect space was not confined to that just between the coaches and players, but also stretched to the coaching staff. Steve and Joe both emphasised the importance of consistency in the messages they provided in terms of their clarity to the players, as well as, not to undermine each other. The following extract highlighted the coaches’ struggle to manage their differences in opinion:

*Field note extract [January 22nd 2015]*

Joe stands on the edge of the box. He takes one glance at the paper folded in his hand and begins to dictate where every player should be, “Callum here... Alex, you need to be here”. A couple minutes of explanation pass and Joe shouts to Seb, “Put it where we said, just lift it”. Seb plays his first corner over the heads of everyone. Steve interludes, “try curling it Seb, just a bit of whip to the front post”. Seb follows Steve’s instructions. Joe stands in silence. Seb’s efforts are better but the corner is still not successful. “No, no, I think you should just lift it. Strike through it to the front post,” Joe comments. Seb tried again but no success, again. Steve interludes one more time, “the curled corner worked better”. Joe begins to walk over to Seb, he calls for all the players’ attention, “look, these corners really do work, they just require execution. This corner can be the difference and has been the difference between winning and losing a game. I’m telling you now, set plays are the way a lower league opposition can beat a higher standard opponent. All we need is one of these to work in a game and that is the difference of one point and three. Now it is all on the ball in Seb, just lift the ball to the front post”. Steve does not add to Joe’s comments.

Adamant the “messages” provided to players should not be contradictory, the coaches’ differences in opinion were often more subtle when in the presence of players. This discretion, however, was not afforded to each other outside the presence of the players. The following ambiguity in team selection highlighted the coaches’ reflections on Callum’s performances:

*Field note extract [January 22nd 2015]*

[Set-piece training occurs I stand watching the group.]

Steve sits opposite Joe, blue pen in one hand, piece of paper in the other. He starts to scribble names down on the paper. He pauses for a moment, reflects and then continues to scribble names. He then slides the paper over to Joe and points to Callum’s name, “Callum is the one... [Short pause] When he is on his game he gets goals and he is great but when he isn’t we might as well play with ten. Alex and Floyd have to do his running
for him. Laziest man I know,” Steve waits for a response. “I think you are being a bit harsh on him there. I think he looks much lazier than he is... [Short pause] He offers more than what we see. I do think he is trying” Joe replies. Steve becomes more defensive, “He is, and I agree, I’m not saying that, but it’s not enough. If only he would run a bit more, more proactive than reactive. We would then have some player on our hands”. Joe nods his head.

Such contested debates were a continuous feature between the coaches. The more contentious issues included those related to team selection, tactical variation, as well as, the performance related discussion identified earlier. Such behind the scenes debates advanced the coaches’ criticality within their work. Through challenging their discussions, the coaches were able to respect each other’s space within the team, whilst maintain an evaluative edge. That said, such conversations were not always smooth, and conflicting codes meant that the coaches often disagreed on particular topics and interpretations. The subsequent interactions between the coaches meant ‘repair-work’ was occasionally needed, usually in the form of one coach conceding an argument. The coaches’ were required to ‘heal’, just like the players following poor performances.

4.6 “We’re going with the best eleven”: Manipulating the code

The codes constructed at Bayside Rovers F.C. were bound by context. The focus of the following section is to highlight their continual construction through the work of coaches and players ‘in-action’. The purpose is to introduce how the actors produced the codes to ‘make sense’ and justify actions and decisions, to reach preferred outcomes. Those deemed ‘good players’ by coaches (and others) were competent in ‘doing’ the codes. That said, those players were not necessarily the ones who were the best performers (played well). Rather, they were able to negotiate all facets of the environment.

The previous description of the codes alluded to a tension between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’. The former required players to contribute through effective individual
performances, whilst the latter stressed a co-operative obligation for players to contribute to the team. These two codes were complex but linked through a reciprocal relationship; that is, individual execution was required to playing well but to achieve this, the player had to work with others. The two codes had to be satisfied to ensure regular selection. The coaches continually strived for their ‘best eleven’, or more appropriately, the best squad available for that match, creating a hierarchy. And so, in an attempt to regulate the players, the coaches would cultivate their decisions in light of the two codes. For instance, for large parts of the season, Floyd was subject to Steve and Joe’s selection in and out of the team. Floyd was a quick, energetic attacking player but his form was erratic. Such inconsistency meant Floyd was not able to hold down a regular starting position. Instead, he was largely used towards the latter stages of games (“off the bench”) where he was able to produce immensely influential performances. This posed a continual selection dilemma for the coaches and required sensitive management. In this case, through accentuating Floyd’s importance as a substitute, the coaches were able to create a tension to ensure Floyd’s compliance. The following account from Floyd illustrates his awareness of the tension between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’:

Field note extract [February 12th 2015]

[Floyd and I walk to the pitch from the dressing room. We instantly start discussing the team for Saturday.]

“What’s your thought on Saturday? Do you think you’ll be back in?” I ask. “Will I fuck,” Floyd answers. It is a sensitive subject. “Come on, you’ve done well recently,” I reply. Floyd glares at the floor and speaks, “Yeah I feel like I have been playing well, it’s a contradiction but I know it’s only been off the bench.” He sighs. “what do you mean?” I probe. “I started that game after Christmas and for whatever reason I just didn’t have a good game at all. I don’t know why and then a week later I was back on the bench. I only got given one chance to try and prove that what I was doing in 20 minutes I could do for 90. It’s tough but I know what I’ve got to do... [Short pause] Just gotta keep my head down for now.”
Floyd’s compliance was an example of ‘reading’ the relationship between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’. Floyd’s willingness to continue working hard, subsequently ‘fitting-in’ and contributing from ‘the bench’ (‘playing well’), ensured his selection and consolidated his contribution (i.e. his space). For the coaches then, ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’ were mutually supportive. In this instance, Floyd’s adherence allowed for the development of a new strengthened sentiment - “Floyd is pushing for a starting position, so you must make sure you are playing so well you can’t be dropped”.

By valuing individual performances within the structure, the coaches were granted further space to develop the team. The idea here was to ensure even the ‘best’ players worked together and did not become complacent. Steve and Joe referred to this as ‘raising personal standards’. In doing so, the coaches aimed to oil the cogs (players) in their machine (team):

*Field note extract [December 13th 2014]*

*The players gather for the final session prior to the Christmas period.*

Joe gathers the players around the centre circle. A brief passing drill has players interchanging with the ball. He then stops and resets the players on the outside of the circle. “Rhys and Callum, in the middle,” he barks. Fiddling with his watch Joe swivels to see all the players. “Circle of death (the name of a running drill). Rhys you defend first. Callum, you want to score goals? Then you get rid of him, hurt him. And Rhys, you mark him like a rash, bump him... Go!” The two players instantly start flying around the circle; one chasing the other. The surrounding players’ eyes follow each movement. Any distance created was treated with a jeer from the crowd. Joe calls the players to an end and the next two enter. Grimace fills Callum’s face. “Fuck,” he shouts, trying to catch his breath.

The activity above allowed Joe to create a direct comparison between players; that is, the physical attributes of players racing and the technical ability of players isolated against each other. Such engineered competition meant players combined fitness and skill to compete against one another in front of an audience of peers. Poor performance was reinforced in the form of derogatory comments or public berating from both the coaches and fellow players. Whilst the players shared the suffering caused by the activity, the isolation and comparative
nature of this activity required maximum effort. Isolating players’ performances in this way safeguarded against any complacency.

Moreover, maintaining levels of individual performances was integral for selection at Bayside as the coaches valued recruiting “the best players”. Will and Jamie’s arrival at the Bayside was an example of this (see page 114). That said, returning to the orchestra analogy, although each instrument was encouraged to play the song with style, the coaching staff firmly advocated the ‘orchestra’ outweighed any one musician. Thus, egoism, in the form of playing too loud was perceived as damaging. Even when players’ performances were isolated, judgements were always relational in light of the team’s performance. This required a continual competence to balance the relationship between ‘playing well’ (egoism) and ‘fitting-in’ (team-work) throughout the squad. However, this relationship became strained when dealing with obstinate, un-compliant players. Levels of ‘buy-in’ fluctuated among the players at Bayside. For example, Alex strained the importance ‘fitting-in’ when he was perceived as not sacrificing for the team. Alex was an exceptionally talented attacking player who struggled with an inconspicuous injury after returning from an unscheduled short break holiday. The player’s refusal to train or play during this period coincided with a drop in team results:

Field note extract [February 6th 2015]

I walk back with Joe to the changing rooms. His usual calm demeanour evades him, “Charlie, tell me what is wrong with Alex? Does he not realise when he plays, we play? He wants to play a bit then he doesn’t. It is hurting the team. You wouldn’t believe it, back in my day blokes would jump through walls to play. You would do anything. I didn’t play once 100%, you can’t; I don’t think you can! But Alex wants to be perfect to play. You gotta put everything into it even if you are not quite right, go over the pain barrier. I did a few times, I know that. It’s about the pride to stand up and go and play, stop others from playing.”

Joe’s concerns emphasised Alex’s importance to the team, and so, drawing upon the ‘fitting-in’ code, he questioned Alex’s ‘buy-in’ to Bayside. The subsequent message to Alex was one
of obligation to the team and to get back playing. Although Alex contributed through high levels of performance, his refusal to put the team ahead of his concerns meant he was perceived as not doing enough to ‘fit-in’. ‘Fitting-in’ meant to sacrifice. The coaches’ emphasis on ‘fitting-in’, therefore, was a search for further compliance from Alex, in relation to the team ethos.

In contrast to the value placed on ‘fitting-in’, the coaches were not myopic in their selection of altruistic players. When team performances did not reach expected levels, regardless of result, the coaches engineered space to make decisions regarding selection. For example, the players winning would, in their opinion, often equate to a sufficient performance; “three points, job done”. Therefore, changing the team was perceived to be a difficult consideration for both the players and coaches. The coaches dealt with expectations regarding team selection through constantly emphasising facets of the codes. This was often done during team-talks where the whole squad could be addressed. For example, following the Christmas break, Bayside had a series of questionable performances and eventually lost to a local team which initiated a change in sentiment. In light of players returning to fitness, both Steve and Joe shifted their emphasis from “sticking together”, in favour of individual performances. In doing so, the coaches were able to frame their selection choices accordingly:

Field note extract [January 17th 2015]

[The players return to the dressing room; heads down, arms folded.]

Steve strides into the dressing room. He stands tall, shoulders back. He begins, “today is the day we win the league. We lost, so you may think I am being ridiculous and I hope I don’t eat my words but I truly believe that. We [Joe and Steve] now don’t have to worry so much about keeping people happy. I tried that today, we have been true to our word of people keeping their places but today hasn’t worked so now I will pick my best 11 at all times. I pick the team that will win and win at hard places and so we can win this league. I kept it the same today because I thought some of you may be disheartened at not losing and changing a team… [Short pause] Not for me anymore though, I will pick the team that will win the game”. Joe continues Steve’s sentiment, “I have to say I don’t think
there is anything wrong with this side, I’m adamant about that. This just goes to show, if you don’t prepare right, your head isn’t in the right place, teams like that will come out punching, scratching and snarling and they will beat you if you don’t match them. We are not a bad side overnight, we didn’t work hard enough today though. I said before the game if we don’t match them for all their enthusiasm and endeavour we won’t win and that is exactly what has happened here today.” The players are silent, the coaches’ leave.

Here, the team’s unsatisfactory performance resulted in the coaches placing greater value on picking the ‘best’ individuals. In this sense, losing the game allowed the coaches to exaggerate the (individually orientated) ‘play well’ code which allowed them the ‘space’ to manipulate the sentiment provided. Such a sentiment meant that whilst the players were under the impression their places were under threat, and consequently must play better, the associated reaction from the players was to increase their compliance and hard work in light of the instructions provided. The instruction could then be tailored by the coaches to alleviate the responsibility from the players through allocation of precise role clarity in relation to what was expected of them, and consequently, how they would be judged (selected). The example highlights the overlapping and mutually supportive strands of ‘play well’ and ‘fitting-in’.

The coaching staff directed the majority of discussions with the players, most often in the form of team-talks. Team-talks were a constant feature before and following training sessions and matches. Through careful preparation of sentiment, each talk allowed the coaches to manage the players’ ‘spaces’. Handling each player’s position was imperative to maintain a degree of harmony within the team. In the latter part of the season, Bayside were striving for a promotion place which required them to play several games in quick succession. The high workload meant several individuals within the squad were continually disappointed with selection choices. The following example highlighted an underlying message of unity from the coaches:
Field note extract [April 7\textsuperscript{th} 2015]

[The players sprawl out on the pitch. Floodlights beam down on the group. Steam glides from the heads of the players. They look exhausted.]

The opposition leave the pitch. Their flash looking, young manager yells and moans up the stairs. The noise soon fades and Joe begins, “on Saturday I questioned how much you really wanted to be in this title race, I questioned how much you wanted it, how much you wanted to be here. I said it at half time, and I can officially say it here. Tonight, you proved exactly how much you want it, I hoped, I knew you would, but I needed to see it. The sign of a good man or woman is not their ability to avoid adversity, that isn’t going to happen; it is how they deal with it; how they bounce back. We could have laid down tonight and said yep, OK, good go at it this season, we will do it next season and build from there. But that isn’t good enough for me and you have showed that is not good enough for you tonight and I fully respect you for that. I applaud every one of you tonight, even those who didn’t get on the pitch; we need you every bit as much, this effort is for all of you. Without those of you on the bench the players out there have nothing to drive them forward. There are plenty of minutes left and they are for you.” Steve continues, “I completely agree, in my recent years at this club I have to say that is the most satisfying win we have ever had; a genuine mature performance out there. For a young team like us to go out there and press, hassle and do the right things in the right areas like we did tonight is a great performance, for everyone. We have some huge games left and without every single one of you pulling together, including you Danny, Woody, Floyd even Allan to act in the way you have tonight, it is a credit to your attitude, the club and this team. Having said that... [Short pause] the job is far from done and we must keep our eyes on the goal. Saturday is not going to be an easy place to go so it is important to keep things on track. Well done lads.”

The manipulation of the codes was not confined to the coaching staff, however. Co-construction of the codes meant the players also influenced the workings of the club. The players were not merely subject to the manipulation of the codes; for example, Alex missed three games in January after an unscheduled trip abroad. Breaching the ‘fitting-in’ code meant Alex was scorned for his actions. However, not only was Alex a crucial player on the pitch, his eccentric character and quick wit made him popular among staff and teammates. So, when Alex returned, he was able to negotiate his re-entry to the team through emphasising the ‘play well’ code:
Interview extracts [January 20th 2014]

Me: “How did it feel returning to training?”

Alex: “Well I was definitely a bit tentative about coming back after skiing. I didn’t know how the players would react to me and what they have been saying about me while I’ve been away. Same for the coaches really but I didn’t mind though. I just knew that when I started that I had to look sharp and prove that I hadn’t lost any fitness. Put myself back in the picture straight away otherwise I knew they [the coaching staff] would be pissed off at me more for going.”

Me: “What was the reaction?”

Alex: “There was a definite tension among the players, like an elephant in the room and the coaches started clapping as I came over. I just laughed it off but I knew they weren’t ‘appy. As soon as we started warming up though the lads asked me some stories and that, how it was, which immediately helped me feel settled again. We started cracking a few jokes and playing on it. So as far as the first session being done, I feel I need to re-establish my place. Prior to skiing I was first choice for my position but now I know I won’t go straight back in... that just wouldn’t be fair. I know I need to prove myself and start playing well again.”

Alex’s return illustrated the swirling relationship between the codes. The coaches disapproved of his (lack of) commitment, as did many of the players, yet his ability to perform allowed his return and further still, the players willingly accepted his return to the brotherhood. Alex’s account included both his awareness of, and ability to, construct the codes through his actions. Unlike Jamie, who was introduced earlier in the chapter, Alex was able to ‘read’ the social landscape for his re-entry. Both examples featured players who temporally strained the codes through testing the ‘fitting-in’ code. For Alex however, an eagerness to show he was remorseful combined with a willingness to contribute to the team meant it was not long before he was accepted and playing again.

Building upon this sentiment, an ability to ‘read’ the social landscape in terms of selection was heavily influenced by the coaches’ regarding which code was most prominent at any given time. For Steve to draw upon the requirements of ‘fitting-in’ (i.e., to attend all sessions), he would emphasise his own contribution and altruistic position within the club.
His actions evidenced the importance placed upon the codes, and therefore, provided leverage for the expectancy of the players. The following extract highlights this standard:

*Field note extract [December 11th 2014]*

The players form groups of four and five with a ball except for Richard and Clive who stand laughing with Steve. Steve then turns to the clock overshadowing the pitch, 17.35. “Rhys, where is Phil?” he barks. Rhys shrugs. “Go for a run,” he replies. Steve pulls out his phone as the players circle the pitch.

Moments later Steve calls for the group to reconvene. “I’m preaching to the converted here, but I’m not having this. Phil is late again, no phone call, no text, anyone know where he is?... [Silence from the players] Well, I’m telling you, one of you needs to get a grip of him. I’ve had enough of this, he is late every week and it is simply not good enough. I’m not late, Joe isn’t late, everyone can make it on time, why can’t he? It doesn’t stop at lateness. You accept that, you accept a man running off his shoulder; you let him get away with it and won’t say anything. I’m not having it. Off you go, do another lap and then we are back in.” The players leave. “He is always late in fairness,” Will mumbles.

The search by Steve and Joe here was to manage compliance. In doing so, it was assumed that compliance ‘off’ the pitch would more likely equate to that ‘on’ it. This instruction was referred to as ‘structure’; that is, a guideline to what was required by the players both technically and tactically. This information was congruent throughout training, informal conversation and team-talks. For instance, pre-match team-talks were an ideal opportunity for coaches’ to revisit and reiterate the consistent instructions. Here, the players were seen as recipients of detailed instruction. Without neglecting spontaneity, the ‘messages’ had been prepared prior to their delivery. The details provided were, therefore, precise to the team and the individuals. The following segment is an example of a typical team-talk:

*Field note extract [December 12th 2014]*

[Joe stands to address the players. He has placed markers denoting the team’s formation on the whiteboard on the nearside of the room.]

Joe: “Massive game today lads, top of the table clash, but I am not worried about them. Not interested; all about us in this dressing room. No one seems to want to win this league, except us, I certainly do! So the starting line-up today; one Richard, two Phil, three Clive... [Continues to name the squad] So we will set up with a usual
four at the back, two holders, three across the middle and Cal you up top on your own, but never on your own, OK!? If you are in for Alex today and Woody I want you to sit and protect the back four, but not here [grabs and slides the marker which denotes Woody’s position] up here, pressing the ball and winning every second ball. Anything on the half volley you have to meet it. If we don’t press high up the pitch then it gives absolutely no chance for Rhys and Will to squeeze us up. So if we are squeezing high I need you Charlie to organise that. Phil in here [moves a different marker] while Clive you tuck round on the other side. If I remember them correctly from the last game they go short and then hit the big switch so Rhys, if that happens, make sure you and Clive have your spaces correct, nothing drops in between. Callum, where are you son?” Callum raises his hand, “Right, you are up here, you must stretch the game for us, those little sharp runs inside the full backs and centre halves [slides the marker several times across the board]. Keep away from the game so that there is space for the three behind you. If you do that, they can have a good game. I’ll be watching for it. Keep the spaces small and we all stick to our principles. You know these principles now, I don’t need to remind you” Joe stares into the crowd, he makes eye contact with all the players before instructing, “Enjoy it out there today!”

Joe could have pointed out a variety of features: kicking the ball in the goal; which part of the foot to use; to only pass to your team mates; the wind that blows up the pitch; the opposition’s stale blue kit; the fact three points will be gained; the colour of boots their manager is wearing. The details of the game (the rules of the game) and the possible reflections (“I don’t know what formation they will try and play against us”) within the team-talk and the football match were endless. However, the details and information provided by Joe were the observable features: for example, some of those observables included the specific runs identified (e.g., “sharp runs inside the full back and centre halves” or “tucking in”). These particular instructions were essential as they combined features to create a common property; that is, to play the game exactly how the coach would like. There was an endless amount of decisions for the players to engage with during a match: where to stand, when to run, who to mark, where to sprint, how to control, when to pass etc. For the player faced with this challenge of infinite decisions, including the opposition’s movements, the ‘landmarks’ provided by the coach were used as directions to guide how to play the game. These ‘landmarks’ were not a linear order for the players to follow but descriptions to guide.
Therefore, the features provided were used as criteria for assessing and ‘seeing’ performances. For example, consider the instruction given to Woody to win ‘second balls’; should Woody be ‘seen’ by the coach to win ‘second balls’, then he would be classed as ‘playing well’ despite an array of different responsibilities he could be judged upon. Consequently, a congruent link could be seen for the players regarding the coaches’ instructions and the assessment of their performances.

In this respect, although the features (as well as the rules and regulations) were not complicated, the players faced complications given the individuality of each match and the subsequent opponents involved in it. For example, Callum could attempt to ‘stretch’ the game but the opposition’s tactics might not allow Callum to ‘stretch’ a game that could not be ‘stretched’. The premise behind the instruction was that Callum must stretch the game in order to provide space for the players behind. That was why Callum was originally provided the descriptor to his performance. The information would be observable in the overall account of the game. Consequently, should Callum fail to stretch or maintain a stretched game, the coaches’ evaluation of Callum’s performance would be impacted. Callum’s evaluation then became dependent upon how the coaches interpreted what they ‘saw’ (e.g., the stretched game or a failure to stretch the game). That in mind, the relationship between what Steve and Joe saw and what the players did, the instruction and action, was so entangled it became almost impossible to distinguish between who saw (who sees) and who was seen, who plays and who was playing. Essentially, Callum played, made decisions and performed like the other players in order to be ‘seen’, but what could be seen was oriented around the instruction provided by Steve and Joe.

Relatedly, the instruction given by coaches can be described as a form of football conjecture. A football match involves numerous things: running, kicking, tactics and shouting. However, the coaches’ information provided may not be readily ‘seeable’. Rather,
players must work to orient their actions, through the accessible instruction provided, towards the ‘seeable’. Returning to the earlier example of ‘stretching the game’, Joe knew the opposition would play some form of defence, and given the rules of the game, would hold some form of defensive line to restrict space. In this way, the information to ‘stretch’ the game could be ‘seeable’ and accessible to the athlete. For struggling players then, the coaches were able to provide more specific hypothesising to help them perform within the game. Through reducing the complexity of the information given, or providing contextual markers to player, the coaches’ subsequent criteria of judgement were made clear. The description and information given assured the players that should they carry out the instruction, they would be deemed as ‘playing well’. The following extract illustrates the coaches’ management of Tom’s performance criteria:

*Field note extract [December 8th 2014]*

[Joe and Steve discuss the weekend’s result.]

Joe: “That was a massive win on Saturday! 3-1 against last year’s champions. I must say, the midfield battle was won which made the difference.”

Steve: “To think we gave them so much respect at their place. Tom didn’t play down there but I thought he was good Saturday. He pressed hard and won the second balls all over”

Joe: “He has really bought into that... ‘The shark’,” both coaches laugh. “Seriously, he runs so much and now we have put some structure on what he needs to do and it makes a huge difference. Managing that space means he eats up those second balls and we are instantly on the front foot. We can get Alex and Callum into the game earlier and it makes such a difference. Just making sure he knows what he is in the team for. It is important he builds from that now.”

Steve: “I completely agree. I actually think he showed a little bit more on the ball than I expected. I didn’t think he had that but it was good to see.”

The coaches’ instruction had a definite, very peculiar property for Tom: it was intended to allow the player to ‘play well’ and, more importantly, contribute to the team’s winning performance. Everybody knew the instructions provided and the ‘game’ itself were two
different things: the instructions were but instructions, whereas the players had to play the
game. The players receiving the instruction(s) were expected to listen for, and orient to, the
features mentioned. In Tom’s case, his criteria for success was reduced to winning “second
balls” and being seen to do this on the pitch equated to the coaches’ being pleased with his
performance. Building upon this understanding between the seer and seen, the coaches were
also able to provide more ambiguous instructions which required interpretation from the
players. Not every detail here could be accounted for and, therefore, through more
standardised instruction, the coaches could determine if their instructions had been executed
accordingly. For example, Steve and Joe frequently referred to dealing with the ‘spaces’ on
the pitch. This related to the relationships between players; players too close or too far away
could result in the team becoming exposed. This instruction required players to interpret and
manage their respective space on the pitch without definitive mechanical instructions.

Such instruction overlooked the endless amount of detail which could have been
provided (e.g., “body position”, “area on the pitch”, “angle of approach”). Steve and Joe
recognised there was infinite detail within the match and they could not know what would
happen. The previous example of Joe’s team-talk (see page 128) catered for the
unpredictability of the matches through requiring the players to make their own decisions.
The paradox here, of course, was that the decisions must be the right ones in order to be
‘seen’. In this respect, the instructions, like a jig-saw puzzle, provided the details that would
allow the puzzle pieces (players) to find relevance together as a team. However, unlike puzzle
pieces, the players were competent actors themselves able to shape the processes which the
coaches tried to orchestrate. Successful performances were the achievements of the continual
game plan of the match; that is, a theory which the players needed to execute well to
influence the diagnosis of whether they had performed well or not. Through a competent
ability to ‘see’, the coaches could then search for advancement in both individuals and as a
team (e.g., Tom’s structured performances). However, in pursuit of winning the game, the hypothesis sometimes needed altering. The competency here required the coaches to appreciate the players’ understanding of their instruction and, therefore, not become rigid in what they had ‘seen’ from the players. Rhys indicated on several occasions the reciprocity within the environment:

Field note extract [April 4th 2015]

Rhys: “We can influence the session loads though I reckon – little things like moaning or being positive. Depends how things go. It only takes one flick to come off and everyone is buzzin’ but if you get it wrong and moan like fuck, then you change the mood. I reckon the coaches can sense that as well, they always say about the mood or if it is flat”

With that in mind, the players were knowledgeable and competent, meaning that any disagreement or conflict regarding what the coaches’ were ‘seeing’ was inevitable. Consistent messages strived for an intersubjective agreement regarding ‘good performances’. In turn, the coaches had to be considered as striving to improve the players with their interpretations and instructions. The manipulation here meant that observations from the coaches required careful management of what was disclosed to the players. The following extract highlights the negotiation between coach and player in relation to what had been ‘seen’:

Field note extract [February 16th 2015]

[Training session commenced as usual.] The ball fires from side to side. The players in defence are required to move the ball forward quickly. Callum springs onto Will. Will’s hesitation allows Callum to whip the ball from his feet. Steve instantly barks from the side-line at his lack of ball movement. “Why are you taking three, four touches there?... [Short Pause] You don’t need to. Get your head up with a positive first touch and play into Tom or Phil. Two options minimum you have. If you two can’t move the ball from the back then there is no point us playing. When we go away from quick ball movement and playing from the back we are average at best. I’d get 11 lumps if we were to shell it. Now move the ball quickly.” Will looks bemused; he glances to Rhys before strolling back to his position.

I get back to the car with Will and Rhys; radio off and windscreen wipers on full. Silence descends on the players for a moment. They look fatigued and frustrated. “Steve doesn’t
“Give us a fucking break does he!?” Will begins. Rhys continues, “A few mistakes and the world collapsed. I’m a defender and I get the most ball, I think he needs to see what else we are doing.” Will nods, “We have the best defensive record in the league. I know I am not technically gifted, but he doesn’t see that. He only sees me as a ball playing centre half. Well I ain’t. I know what I can do, I could do better on the ball; Steve doesn’t want to know that though”.

Will and Rhys’s conversation illustrated a difference between what they were ‘seeing’ and what Steve had ‘seen’. Whilst Steve was trying to improve the players, the difficulty of his task was further complicated by the magnitude of details he was required to ‘see’ from all the players, all the time. This was in contrast to the players involved, who would ‘see’ and remember everything they had engaged with as individuals. This meant a failure to be seen often resulted in frustration. Whilst Will and Rhys appeared dissatisfied with what Steve had ‘seen’ (i.e., their defensive record), the players were in fact agreeing that they were not executing the original descriptor of “quick ball movement”. Therefore, Steve had successfully negotiated the instance through highlighting what they were failing to execute.

4.7 Control, security and insecurity: A paradoxical combination

This final section has been placed at the end of the chapter to supplement the core themes provided thus far. The aim here is not necessarily to provide new themes, but to add an additional layer of complexity to the existing codes. In doing so, it is hoped that the section will stimulate further understanding of the codes in terms of ‘why’ they were constructed within this particular coaching milieu. Thus, three additional strands of the helix will be presented: security, insecurity and control.

The first, and arguably the most important, strand offered is control. The environment at Bayside was ever-changing, with the ebb and flow creating uncertainty; that is, uncertainty in terms of player performances, playing conditions, injuries, opposition and success (learning). Consequently, an overarching pursuit of control existed for coaches and players.
Both parties undoubtedly desired success, however, both were subjected to the context constructed. In order to meet their desired needs, the most obvious example of the codes was observed through ‘fitting-in’. Here, in spite of performances, compliance and unity were required from the players to ensure selection. The emphasis placed a sacrificial obligation upon all involved to the club and to the team. In doing so, the value placed on this code fostered compliant players. In fact, the coaches often emphasised the importance of the team over any individual ‘playing well’. The ‘space’ the coaches operated within was unstable; they directed how the team would play and, in doing so, strived for player compliance to execute their instructions. Compliance was, therefore, an underlying necessity from and for the coaches. Through emphasising the ‘fitting-in’ code, the coaches strived to influence and control the environment:

Field note extract [February 5th 2015]

[The players gather in the dressing room following a hard session in preparation for the upcoming league fixture.]

The players shuffle around the dressing room, some half-dressed, others ready to leave immediately. Steve and Joe spent a large proportion of the training session doing shape work [football terms for formational tactics]. Usually, this time following training is vibrant with players’ discussions. Today, however, a tension fills the air. Phil complains to Will about the information provided to him. His disgruntled attitude towards training has not gone unnoticed by the others. He addresses Will, “You can’t say anything to those two, they won’t listen…” Will doesn’t respond. Phil then quickly re-assesses his words. “Well they do, but it won’t change what they have planned. I guess they have already thought of it and that’s it, you have to go with their plan. They reckon I have a bad attitude but I am not moaning; I just don’t agree with what they want us to do or how they want us to play at times. It isn’t personal, but now I am the moaner.” Will shrugs his shoulders then replies, “I know what you mean, but they are tryin’ to make us better.”

The extract above indicates the importance of players accepting the overall ‘philosophy’ that had been assigned to Steve and Joe’s programme. As mentioned earlier, resistance was common from players when they felt neglected and underappreciated for their work. In this case, Phil quickly altered the expression of his opinion as Will disapproved of his original
account. This was not a personal attack from Will on Phil but a critique of his compliance and ‘buy-in’ to the programme. Consequently, the coaches’ negotiation of ‘fitting-in’ spread to compliance away from their presence, making acts of resistance among players disapproved of.

Furthermore, in the latter stages of the season one player was questioned for his attitude. Through emphasising the importance of ‘fitting-in’, the coaches attempted to affect the individual through consolidating the importance of the team. Rather than Steve explicitly addressing an act of resistance from the individual in question, the resulting team-talk questioned what he perceived to be a strategic ‘faking’ within the environment. The resulting strategy confirmed the importance of the codes and a commitment to producing coherent actions:

*Field note extract [February 28th 2015]*

[Steve and Joe stand, arms folded, while the players arrive.]

The players are soaked through, covered with mud. Deep, heavy breaths fill the dressing room. Most stare at the hollow floor. Danny wrestles the taping from around his legs. Steve calls for silence. “Danny! I need your attention.” He freezes instantly. “Today is a disappointing day. How can we lose to a team like that?” Steve pauses and stares but no one returns his gaze. He continues, “I will tell you why; you aren’t willing to execute the game plan. How can you not understand the pitch and the context of the game? Do you know what really frustrates me?... [Short pause] The attitude in this dressing room. Seb, you are a senior player, you have been brought in to help us win this league but you need to get a hold of a few in here. You senior players need to start weeding out the rotten players in this dressing room, the ones not willing to commit, to put the hard work in. You want it to happen, but you aren’t willing to work for it. To sacrifice anything and that’s why you thought it would be easy. Take a look at yourselves tonight, tomorrow. Think about what you are adding, are you doing enough? Joe.”

Despite seeking the compliance of athletes, the coaches appreciated the importance of developing players who were self-sufficient to execute their instructions. Of course, a good decision could only be deemed ‘good’ in light of what was ‘seen’ and what was ‘seen’ was inextricable tied to the original instruction. Therefore, the players were not ‘self-sufficient’ but ‘team-sufficient’; that is, they understood what was (and what wasn’t) classed as making good decisions in the eyes of the coaches. With that in mind, a more intricate level of control
was observed. That is, the coaches supported the learning of their players through controlled and structured activities: for example, possession based exercises (where one side must keep the ball from another) included ‘conditions’ which only allowed two touches of the ball. Here, the ‘condition’ meant should a player have more than two touches their team would relinquish possession. The exercise was designed to facilitate a number of learning points, although Joe recognised a further property:

Joe: “Well one and two touch forces the players to move the ball quickly. I also like no 1-2’s [football term for passing to the same player] because then you have to get the third player involved. So if I get these players doing that, they are more likely to stick to these principles in the game. They know how I want them to play and then they know what they need to do within the game. They are then more like to stick to what is needed.”

In this way, the planning, design and associated feedback of all the activities were to improve the players, although, this was in light of what Bayside wanted (i.e., what the coaches wanted). The effect of the subsequent constraint was twofold. Firstly, the players were governed to pass the ball within two touches which, as mentioned above, aligned with Steve and Joe’s aims of quick ball movement. Secondly, the constraint reduced any room for interpretation and intuition because the decision was reduced/removed from the players. Again, the result was that players aligned with the demands requested from the coaches.

Building upon the concept of control, a further two themes can be identified; security and insecurity. Both security and insecurity were in reference to what the coaches could offer the players at Bayside. Security then, was the guarantee of attention and support from the coaches, usually in the form of selection. In this case, the players had to contribute to the environment and, in turn, staff pledged a guarantee to work and develop the individuals concerned. In this way, the compliance of players was exchanged for advice and development of the players. The security provided was an implicit exchange – not necessarily one of monetary value. Thus, when a player was perceived to be ‘short-changing’ the bargain, usually through complacency or reduced levels of compliance, the coaches aimed to de-
stabilise the player through creating insecurity. The purpose was to ensure compliance to the programme was not taken-for-granted. This is not to denote insecurity as a lack of support, but rather, to provide a tension or anxiety for the players which allowed them to perform, and in doing so, comply. The balance between providing the players security and insecurity was an everyday negotiation for the coaches. For example, Seb arrived from a prestigious professional side. His arrival was aided through Steve and Seb’s relationship. In this case, Steve used his previous experiences to persuade Seb to join Bayside. Through providing Seb the reassurance his commitment would be cherished, Steve was able to provide the young player with the security to perform and develop on a weekly basis.

Seb’s story was a very generic illustration of the security the coaches provided to the players. A more intricate example was demonstrated in Tom’s case, introduced earlier in the chapter (see page 140). Here, Steve and Joe were able to micro-structure Tom’s development as a player in light of executing simplified instructions provided (i.e., ‘second balls’). Joe managed Tom’s performance requirements through reducing the descriptors and, consequently, the criteria for judgement. Thus, the coaches ‘controlled’ his performances through providing the security for success. In essence, the coaches took away any decisions regarding playing through giving him very precise instruction. In doing so, they allowed for Tom’s, and subsequently, the team’s success.

In a different guise, the dressing room (brotherhood) also provided players a security and familiarity within the team. Richard, for example, was adamant regarding his pre-match ritual. Despite often receiving comical remarks for his actions, Richard explained “I need to sit in my seat before games, it is where I am comfortable. I know what to expect and I can do the same routine”. The familiarity and security expressed here required individuals, particularly new ones, to ‘read’ themselves into the dressing room landscape. The security Richard referred to from the dressing room (the brotherhood) could not be provided by the
coaches. Similar to my experience of harsh and public criticism from Steve, the brotherhood provided a layer of security that could support and help ‘heal’ players. With that in mind, insecurity could not be avoided within such a performance based environment. The following example encapsulates Danny’s search for security:

Field note extract [January 26th 2015]

The players pass through the doors in clusters. Some leave immediately while others sit chatting. Danny arrives with his boots in hand. He has a slight frame and often wears his shirt tucked into his shorts. Danny wears white socks pulled up to his calves and his freshly shaved face disguises his age. “Here he is, the little brother,” Woody shouts from the showers. Laughter erupts. “Come on boys, I’m having a bad night,” Danny responds. His comments are ignored. He then turns to Alex, “Seriously mate, I’m having a shitter at the moment”. Woody peers round the corner before Alex can reply, “Fuckin’ hell Dee, get on with it. Stop worrying about everything so much and stop a cross would you.” Laughter erupts again. Danny offers a nervous laugh in return.

Despite Danny seeking the healing properties of the dressing room, which were most apparent following poor individual performances, a lack of competence to ‘do’ the codes would abuse such support. In Danny’s case, individuals such as Alex may have been able to offer reassurance of performance (‘play well’) but paradoxically, the ‘brotherhood’ was not paternal in its support of individuals. Instead, Woody’s tough love approach, whilst being humorous for the players, was an act of insecurity; that is, to ensure that ‘standards’ were maintained. Therefore, the players were accepting that Danny did not achieve ‘play well’ on this occasion, but a continuation to do so would lead to being tarnished with a lack of competence. Notwithstanding the importance of all codes, fundamentally, players were required to reach standards of performance. Thus, the coaches drew upon the same insecurity to manipulate and ensure performances were maintained.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION
5.1 Introduction

Although the codes provided in Chapter Four have some standalone merit, the following chapter intends to embellish the work through providing a light theoretical analysis of the results. The analysis draws primarily upon the work of Harold Garfinkel. Additionally, work from associated ethnomethodologists (and phenomenologists) will be used to supplement the discussion. The purpose is to draw upon wider literature to help place the study within the current landscape of sports coaching. The intention, however, is not confined to merely locating the study, but to build upon the current theorization of coaching.

In terms of structure, the Chapter is divided into four sections. In doing so, each section adds a layer of complexity and analysis to the previous. The discussion begins by addressing the notion of competence and mastery of the codes exhibited by the coaches and players throughout the fieldwork. Following this, an examination and deconstruction of ‘seeing’ performance will be provided. The chapter concludes by addressing how the codes were constructed and manipulated for innovation.

5.2 What is competence? Social literacy and the accomplishment of codes

The results presented build upon the numerous studies that have researched football at both a professional and semi-professional level (e.g., Roderick, 2006; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). It is hoped the findings reflect, support and enrich the literature that has depicted competitive football as contested, manipulated and often deceiving (e.g., Potrac et al., 2012). Although aspects of this study allude to the dominant ‘legitimised’ authority within football (Cushion & Jones, 2006), the following investigation of the everydayness of coaching points to an alternative awareness for practitioners and scholars of coaching. Rather than treating the context as merely a ‘topic’ or ‘resource’ (Zimmerman & Pollner, 1970), the ethnomethodological insights illustrate the codes as both constructing and constructed by the
context. This led to situated action and reasoning being the focal point of the research and central to the ethnomethodological insight provided (Livingston, 2008). In this manner, the codes are not claimed as objective and calculable (vom Lehn, 2013), but rather were assembled from my interpretation of the data gathered. For, as Maynard (1991) tells us, actors, in social situations, are required to uphold the taken-for-granted routines that provide a stable environment. However, I believe, like others (e.g., Wieder, 1974), that whilst the codes were contextually bound, they nevertheless provide a suggestive framework that can be used to further explore the murky complexities of coaching.

Lemert (1997) reminds us that social competence is ubiquitous, practical and seemingly native. For the most part, our social competence allows us to see what is unfolding and where we fit in. For Garfinkel (1967), competence was taken as “the claim that a collectivity member is entitled to exercise that he is capable of managing his everyday affairs without interference” (p.57). Following Santos et al.’s (2013) definition, the coaches (and players) in this study were deemed experts and, therefore, the purpose was to make accessible what the coaches already possessed but may not have known. In the case of the coaches and players at Bayside F.C., the codes typically encountered and constructed were an explanation for behaviour; that is, without awareness of the codes, the actors would need to learn anew how to act and deal with their respective counterparts. Comprehensive appreciation of the codes was crucial for longevity and survival within the football club, and hence required a specific situated understanding (Garfinkel, 1967). Liberman (2013) suggested such competence is not static but refers to the continuously emerging and constructed procedures of the actors. The subsequent competence referred to in this discussion is based in, and upon interaction, as opposed to identifying characteristics that coaches ‘possess’ (e.g., Horn, 2008). A failure to master the interactional competencies would result in the coach being tarnished with lacking comprehension. In Garfinkel’s (1967) terms, the interactions witnessed were a
local accomplishment that had been crafted from the ‘observable-and-reportable’ actions and interactions of bona-fide members of the group. In this respect, the competence of staff and players to continually work together without interference was the artfully organised practices of the individuals (Garfinkel, 1967).

Heritage (1987) acknowledged that the use of language, without exception, is bound to its context. The codes were produced in and through interaction, making them indexical (in reference to the specific situation). In this regard, the meaning from the codes relied on specifics such as, who was telling the code, who was listening, where they were being told, and the circumstances in which they were being told (Jimmerson & Oware, 2006). In this manner, the codes were not explicit rules. Rather, the codes procedurally fitted Bayside’s context, allowing for those around them a reading that would make sense. Garfinkel argued that no action is uncategorisable, for even that at the limits of discussion can be classified as ‘insane’ (Rawls, 2002). Thus, mutual understandings in the form of the codes allowed the coaches and players to make sense of situations. For the members of the football club, each action was ‘documentation of’ the codes and, therefore, the action was analysed, adjusted, restored or considered a breach of the context. Thus, the codes were found to have been analysed in and of their own production ‘reflexively’ by the members (Garfinkel, 1967). The accomplishment of the codes meant the coaches and players not only exhibited normal conduct but also made visible conduct that deviated from this, and hence, provided meaning to actions (Heritage, 1987). A classroom context offers a similar example through drawing upon norms that regulate conduct:

“The norms of classroom conduct are, inevitably, the vehicles through which conduct that, for example, challenges or undermines or ridicules the teacher’s role can conceivably be achieved. The visibility of such conduct is available to all participants who have an awareness of the norms – and where their authors can be held to have such awareness, they can thereby be held morally accountable as agents of their actions” (Heritage, 1987, p.44)
Thus, the codes are documentation of underlying patterns, which have been made accountable through the concrete actions of individuals. For example, whilst appearing self-evident in Bayside’s context, ‘fitting-in’ had a specific constitutive role for becoming a member of the football club’s activities. In this regard, Phil’s original lackadaisical approach (discussed on page 114) when joining the club satisfied the requirements of performance but his failure to adhere to the social expectations of the team (e.g., arriving on time) were interpreted as undermining the importance of Bayside’s norms. Phil had to avoid such actions so the ‘fitting-in’ code was not breached and his continued involvement was secured. The interpretive procedures of the codes through which Phil’s actions were rendered intelligible had the property of allowing other actors to ‘read’ the field of action. Phil had to satisfy in the eyes of the coaches and players that he was ‘doing’ enough to fit-in; i.e., attendance and engagement at the sessions and matches. In this way, the codes can be described as ‘symbol treaters’ for the coaches and players of Bayside, and thus, embedded within the recognisable patterned practices of actors in situ (Rawls, 2006).

The codes were continually constructed, which meant their application for coaches and players was a resource for flexible implementation. Garfinkel (1967) suggested that the ordering of interaction can be developed over time to transform situational action and refine social identities. For example, Will (introduced on page 104) was able to secure his place in the team through combining ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting in’. In Will’s case, his actions developed from the awkward boy in the corner to a devoted team member through aligning his conduct with the expectations of Steve, Joe and team mates (See page 115). Thus, Will’s actions became intelligible and appeared as if they were familiar events (Garfinkel, 1967). Meanwhile, Jamie’s journey exhibited a lack of commitment which resulted in a reliance on performance (‘play well’). Whilst good performances provided a temporal allowance, Jamie’s actions were insufficient in terms of ‘fitting-in’. Consequently, he was not able to secure the
longevity within the team. Rawls (2006) would suggest that Will and Jamie’s engagement with the team was made recognisable through the resulting orderliness of Bayside. Such a notion resonates with Crossley’s (2011) concept of ‘sedimented interaction’; that is, shared conventions socially organised which comprise the “joint product of interaction” (Crossley, 2011, p.36).

Returning to Heritage (1987), he suggests “an ‘insolent’ response [or action] to a teacher’s question does not have to be named as such before its character can be recognized; on the contrary, its character has to be recognized before it can be so named” (p.244). In this regard, Jamie (and Phil) could not be labelled as failing to ‘buy-in’ before their actions over time could be recognised as doing so. Jamie’s performances meant he was instantly named a ‘good player’ (‘played well’). In spite of individual performances, which temporarily bought him some space, Jamie’s actions were not accountable to the team (i.e., fitting in), and subsequently, ‘sanctionable’. Jamie’s scenario replicates two complete strangers’ engaging in an initial gratuitous encounter without one detecting a lack of competence in the other. However, continuous coherent interaction requires further comprehension of norms (Liberman, 2013). In Bayside’s context, such comprehension required coaches and players to ‘normalise’ expected actions; that is, maintain performances and contribution to the team. In turn, the coaches and players were better equipped to recognise suspect occurrences, i.e., not fitting-in. Jamie’s case illustrated a failure to grasp the importance of the link between the codes established at Bayside resulting in him being tarnished with a lack of (social) competence.

In order to maintain ordinary practice, individuals must continuously interpret actions in light of context and, in turn, the context can be understood by those actions (Coulon, 1995). Here, with respect to practical action, Garfinkel (1967) suggested members must ‘know’ the settings in which they operate, and that ‘knowing’ is what members require and
count on to produce adequate actions. Thus, the reflexivity of interaction is an integral competence. For Coulon (1995), reflexivity is “that feature of social action that presupposes the conditions of its production and at the same time makes the act observable as an action” (p.23). Henceforth, the meaning associated with ‘playing well’ by the coaches was not merely obtained as first described, but rather, was reflexively constructed using semiotic resources at hand to construct the meaning. Such taken-for-granted reflexivity allowed the players and coaches to recognise, demonstrate and make accountable the codes.

However, the codes did not exist outside of the situations observed, with the contextual actors just following rules (codes). Rather, the codes had to be ‘actualized’ (Coulon, 1995); that is, while the description of the codes established them, the ‘doing’ of the codes was the telling of them (Jimerson & Oware, 2006). For Will then, who was regarded as ‘fitting-in’ (See Steve and Rhys example p.111), when quizzed about Jamie’s actions, he relied on the codes to organise and manage the subsequent interaction. In this respect, the codes were generally tacit, or ‘uninteresting’, but structured and made the situation observable (Garfinkel, 1967).

For example, drawing upon Wieder’s (1974, p.152) ‘reflexive formulation’, the extract where Richard quizzed Will regarding Jamie’s absence (see page 116) emphasised several aspects of the codes: (1) It highlighted just what happened in that Jamie was not there; (2) It formulated what Richard was doing in asking the question, for example, “I am providing a statement that Jamie should be here. My question is not a question”; (3) It formulated the player’s motives for saying what he was saying, for example, “I’m asking the question in order to show everyone they should be here, it is required”; (4) It created an immediate relationship between the player and relocated the conversation in context, for example, “For me to ask you shows you need to attend”; (5) it highlighted the relationship between hearer and teller, for example, “You are a new player and I am a senior player. Some
things I ask you will involve informing on other players and that doesn’t just concern football. Players cannot become aloof from the team”. At that time, the conversation between Will and Richard was interactional but was also a confirmation of role and relationships. The interaction actualised the codes, while the codes provided the procedures for the interaction. The relevance of the interaction between Richard and Will displayed the importance placed upon ‘fitting-in’ by Will, and the seeking of authority and compliance by Richard. In this respect, the ‘uninteresting’ practical actions displayed in this simple scene became the “artful practices of rational inquiry” and, most importantly, had to be understood by the members involved (Garfinkel, 1967, p.9).

The construction of codes within a coaching environment is a new and unexplored concept within sport coaching. However, the codes witnessed at Bayside F.C. resonate with previous work suggesting coaching as a self-organising entity produced through the in situ procedures of the members (Miller & Cronin, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015). In this regard, the findings expose similarities with previous research. More specifically, the relationship between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’ has been alluded to in previous literature (e.g., Ronglan, 2010, 2011). This work addressed the ‘doubleness’ evident in team sports that requires athletes to play against and with each other. Whilst Ronglan (2010) suggested that this competition was beneficial to practice, Purdy et al.’s (2009) ethnographic work revealed a more power-conflicting stance on this negotiation. Here, Sean (the primary actor cited in Purdy’s work) was the source of controversy as his physical capabilities were unquestioned, but his ‘buy-in’ (Potrac & Jones, 2009b) and compliance to the programme were consistently challenged by the coaches. Despite Sean’s rowing prowess (‘playing well’), his actions challenged and broke the construction of ‘fitting-in’. Of interest here, however, is not just the combination of performance and compliance, but the interactional competence required of both coach and athlete. Treating coaching in this manner depicts a more complicated and
thorny understanding of the activity. This conception moves beyond examining concrete features of the occupation unproblematically recognised and acted upon by practitioners (Heritage, 1987). Rather, central to the analysis of the codes was the coherent accounts, made publically available by the coaches and players, of their logical and reasoned occupational action.

Developing this insight further, the ‘brotherhood’ alluded to an intricate strand of athletic membership. Much of the existing literature has undervalued the role of athletes when constructing and organising everyday practices. This is not to claim that the athlete has been ignored. For example, Purdy et al.’s (2009) ethnographic work captured the perspective of the respective athletes to better understand Sean’s struggle for power and compliance. However, the vast majority of literature exploring team environments (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014) has depicted athletes as informants, as opposed to co-constructors of recognisable practices. In this respect, Rawls (2006) refers to the actor as the ‘location for practices’, as opposed to a container for motivations. Such a position opposes the more traditional conceptions in pursuit of the actor’s motivation as entirely situated; that is, the actor is “not to be considered as a whole person but only as a situated identity in relation to a particular situation” (Rawls, 2006, p.21).

Taking this into consideration, the ‘brotherhood’ provided an insight into the interactional competencies required of athletes away from the coaches’ gaze. For example, the reaction from the players following the ‘red card’ (see page 116) was not solely a motivation to support, but instead, a patterned behaviour and requirement of the particular situation that dictated the other actors (Seb and Clive) provided such support. Of course, the brotherhood was not universal, and similarly, those who said nothing were equally appropriate in their action. This was an observable-and-reportable example of the ‘brotherhood’ in action. Thus, harnessing Thompson et al.’s (2015) call for a ‘micro-political
literacy’, an appreciation is required for the ‘social literacy’ of both coach and player; that is, the indexical understanding to construct recognisable practice.

Consequently, through identifying the codes, the ethnomethodological analysis of Bayside F.C. contributes to further understanding the contested workings of coaching and the unavoidable reflexivity of interaction (Garfinkel, 1967). Accepting that the actions of the individuals are indexical, the codes have further examined the context in which decisions are made (Randall, Rouncefield & Hughes, 1995). Therefore, the importance of the coaches and players in telling the codes provides a subtle insight to the interactional competencies required of coaches (social literacy). Such a notion builds upon Potrac and Jones’ (2009b) assertion that coaching is “as much about careful personal negotiation, orchestration, and manipulation, as about improving the performance of individuals or the team” (p.566).

5.3 How do you know? Seeing performance

The study of street basketball players by Jimmerson and Oware (2006) illustrated that, although ethnographic codes explained conduct (Anderson, 1990), ethnomethodologically the conduct explained codes (Wieder, 1974). In this respect, Turner (1971) suggested ethnomethodological analysis has two layers; firstly, a description of membership helps to understand patterns of interaction and, secondly, ethnomethodology analyses the procedural methods of members to accomplish the interaction. In keeping with Wieder’s (1974) observations of patterned behaviour, the codes presented in this study paid attention to how the coaches and players ‘actualised’ the codes (Coulon, 1995). For Turner (1971), the following discussion centres on the procedural methods used by individuals to accomplish the codes. Thus, it explores how the coaches and players managed and made accountable their interpretations to provide meaning within situations; for example, how the coaches and players actualised ‘seeing’ that allowed for the interpretation of performance.
To date, evaluating performance has been a relatively underexplored and overlooked aspect of coaches’ work. Assessments regarding what makes a ‘good’ athlete have been contaminated by objective measurements of performance governed by the sport sciences. For example, Reilly, Williams, Nevill and Franks (2000) determined a series of tests that may be used as an indication for selection onto specialised programmes. The issue here, as Prain and Hickey (1995) point out, is that any ‘biological reductionism’ privileges technical and factual information over interpretation of the act and, more specifically, how that very interpretation is made ‘accountable’ (discussed on page 108). More recently, research has begun to appreciate the importance of observations in the form of ‘noticing’ (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Ronglan and Havang (2011) agree with this sentiment, suggesting “the quality of the observations often distinguishes the ordinary coaches from the really good ones” (p. 92). Here, drawing upon Niklas Luhman, Ronglan and Havang (2011) identified observation as an act of distinction. In doing so, the authors highlighted the importance of making distinctions in order to make reality observable.

Building upon this line of inquiry, for ethnomethodologists, even visual perception is a social phenomenon that must be organised and made accountable within routine practice and social interaction (Lynch, 2013). Within the current study then, seeing was not only an act of interpretation but was central to and for the coaches’ competence. Jayyusi (1993, p.5) tell us that “there are many things that we may look at but not ‘see’; things that we ‘see’ but whose details we do not ‘notice’, and things we see or even take minute note of but do not engage”. In this light, the concern here is not solely on the subjective observation, but the fundamental interactional competencies of the coach to actualise what was ‘seen’. When referring to interpretation then, as Quéré (2012) tells us, it is essential to consider the contextualisation; that is, the visual availability or perceptual intelligibility of a scene depends on who the visual orientation taken up at that scene is (Quéré, 2012). Consequently,
the committed participant (coach) is not disengaged in their observation or judgement. Rather, the coach (Steve and/or Joe) actively constructs their observation from their practical understanding of the scene. In turn, a ‘good’ observation can only be ‘good’ if it is made accountable through the accomplishment of a coherent interaction. Therefore, the importance of an observation shifts from a visual act, to one that relies on the interactional procedures of the members.

Coaching has been recognised as a fluid activity where practitioners must consistently negotiate endless problems, dilemmas and decisions which require intense planning, observational work and evaluation (Bowes & Jones, 2006). In relation to this study, the evaluations made by the coaches were critical for two reasons. Firstly, an evaluation of any player had to be made to warrant selection, and secondly, the evaluation of the player dictated the instruction provided. However, whilst the coaches could coherently account what constituted a good performance (the ‘facts’), and hence, devise good tactics that would work in any detached situation, known as an ‘official line’ (Garfinkel, 1967), the reality was that over the season the very same tactics or instructions would not have the same effect in ‘apparently’ similar conditions. The paradox for the coaches was to concentrate on ‘good’ players and ‘good’ tactics. Without confirmation of success, the coaches concentrated time and effort to raise the likelihood that such tactics would be reproduced (Liberman, 2013). The uncertainty and dependence upon the context, players and opposition was a mystery for the coaches, but dealing with uncertainty was not a matter of an uncanny knack or unconscious knowledge. Recognition of this mystery and providing instruction in relation to what was ‘seen’ was crucial to the coaches’ proposed development of the players. Therefore, ‘seeing’ was continually evaluated in light of previous performances.

The interpretation of each coach of what had been ‘seen’ in a performance was inevitably different (Rawls, 2006, p.x). However, the interpretation formed the basis of
reifying the instruction provided to any specific player. Of interest here was that, what was ‘seen’ influenced the instruction; meanwhile, the instruction guided what would be ‘seen’. For example, one of Callum’s requirements was to ‘stretch the game’ (discussed on page 111), and so, he must be ‘seen’ to stretch the game. Should he not be, Steve and Joe would provide feedback and instruction that required Callum to stretch the game and, consequently, further structure what they would see. Similarly, although each player had an infinite number of decisions to make (discussed on page 109), the coaches’ instructions organised the decisions made by the players. In this way, importance was placed on the original instruction provided by the coaches, which formed the ‘descriptor’ for the players’ performance (Liberman, 2013). A reflective, on-going cycle was thus created in relation to instruction and evaluation.

Whilst this appears unsurprising, the competency of the actors involved here was two-fold. Firstly, the coaches had to be sufficiently competent to recognise and identify what was ‘seen’; that is, to identify the observable-and-reportable features of the performance. Although the action was immediate, the labelling of that action and subsequent interaction was always retrospective (Garfinkel, 1967); for example, “winning second balls” within a half-time team-talk. Secondly, the coaches had also to be sufficiently competent to coherently interact with players (and each other) to make accountable what they had seen; that is, to actualise their interpretations (Liberman, 2013). This meant that even the most original or esoteric thought could only be developed if it was made ‘accountable’ within the interaction (e.g., coach-to-coach). In this way, ‘seeing’ the performance was a social collaboration between coaches and athletes, whether that was deconstructing a performance post-game, providing a half-time team talk, or explaining what had occurred within a training exercise. In turn, the action preceded the interaction, meaning the subsequent interactional work (re)constructed what occurred. Liberman (2013) suggested that the following ‘construction’
was not a case of each coach placing a segment on top of each segment. Rather, the accomplished interaction was filled with non-negotiated information, compiled through the necessities of coherent interaction. For Garfinkel (1967), this means that the coaches were bound by piecing together the interaction, not just the interpretation of their observations and diagnosis.

From this perspective, precisely how the coaches generated their interpretation led to the knowledge itself; that is, a case of wanting to be understood. In this way, each coach was “led on by what he said and the response he received, led by his own thought of which he is no longer the sole thinker” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.119). In fact, Landes (2013) suggested that the spoken words teach and perhaps surprise the speaker from their original thought. Such natural realisation means “the expression is not just for others, but also to know himself what he intends” (Landes, 2013, p.134). This means that, despite a practical wisdom, what is known must be made ‘accountable’ to others (Garfinkel, 2002). Therefore, the ‘concrete version’ produced of what was ‘seen’ was not only subjective but housed by the collective action and procedures – an intersubjective compromise. What is important here, and furthers our understanding of observations and evaluation from coaches, is that the account “is what enables us [coaches] to retrospectively reinterpret some scene and modify our judgments about things and events” (Coulon, 1995, p.33). In doing so, the interaction highlighted to the coaches what they thought they knew. So, the ability to ‘see’ what is occurring depended on their ability to see the details of concrete achievements. In doing so, the visual observation was more than what they saw (e.g., a pass, a tackle, a movement), but had to be qualified by entering directly into a particular interaction (e.g., Steve and Joe’s post-game analysis provided on page 108). In this regard, Quéré (2012) suggested that perception is comprised by an intermediary operation; that is, we do not visually grasp something as an ordered whole and then recognize in this way. Rather, through a meaningful interaction, understanding is
bound to practical activity and, therefore, is the property of (self-accounting) practical action (McHoul, 1998).

Developing this understanding further, what was ‘seen’ was not governed solely by the coaches but required the players to be sufficiently competent in understanding the evaluation, the instruction, and subsequently to execute what was required of them in order to be ‘seen’. In this respect, the indexical language the coaches provided in the form of descriptors (e.g., ‘stretching the game’) had to be mutually agreed upon and understood by the players. Here then, although the rules of football governed the game, the players were required to develop an intersubjective understanding of the instructions. In keeping with Liberman’s (2013) example of individuals playing a board game, the ‘messages’ provided by the coaches were meant to be seen by players in the context of; “of-course-we-know, of-course-this-is-how-it-is-played” (p.122). However, the resulting relationship between the seer and the seen (the coach and the player) is then “so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between who sees and who is seen, who paints and what is painted” (Landes, 2013, p.157). In other words, the athlete plays, makes decisions and performs in order to be seen, although what can be seen has been dictated by the coach. What is achieved is not certainty about the rules of the game, but some expectations regarding what to do and, in just what manner.

Without the reciprocal competency, the original instruction would be worthless and the subsequent evaluation would be detached. This series of instruction from the coaches and action from the players was a continual process and was described by Liberman (2013) as ‘inter-concatenation’. Unsurprisingly then, the linking of instruction and evaluation alludes to what Rawls (2011) has previously identified as “we see things we expect to see” (p.279). For the coaches (and players), the limitation was not what could be seen in an attempt to further the experience, but in the requirement to make what has been seen known and publically
accessible (Liberman, 2013). Borrowing from Merleau-Ponty (1968), the relationship between the seer and the seen is “a fissure that deepens in the exact measure it is filled” (p.53).

The following notion of ‘seeing’ performances resonates with Garfinkel’s (1967) work on Agnes’ ‘passing’ gender; that is, Agnes was able to carefully negotiate situations to ensure her interactions remained coherent, and interlocutors were left without suspect of her change of gender. In this respect, the following analysis provides an insight into the overlooked actions of the coaches and players. Such a perspective suggests that a coach must ‘do’ the ‘seeing’ of performance. Regardless of what coaches’ think they have ‘seen’, interaction is fundamental to how they make ‘knowable’ and ‘observable’ their evaluation of player performance and subsequent diagnosis. This conception of coaching highlights the fundamental competency of coaching - “the seen but unnoticed” (Garfinkel, 1967, p118). In doing so, the awareness builds upon the intricate ambiguities and uncertainties that exist within the occupation. For example, Jones’ (2006a) expression of frustration and anxiety was not a question of knowledge or understanding, but a procedural incongruity. Within the above work the ability to address the players pre-match and provide good reasoning was “not only dependent upon, but contributed to, the maintenance of stable routines of everyday life” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.185). In this respect, Jones’ featured speech impediment was not a recognised ‘feature’ of the situation (e.g., a confident coach), and therefore, was the source of anxiety which interfered with the delivery of a coherent team-talk. Building upon current coaching theorisation, rather than Goffman’s ‘impression management’, Garfinkel (1967) highlighted the importance of ‘management devices’ that must be mastered for practical accomplishments to be realised.

The point made here is that everyday coaching life is not a game where rules can be suspended. As Maynard (1991) states, “it is not a matter of using pre-established skills and
‘methods’ to outwit others” (p.279). Rather, any wit must be accomplished ‘in-course’ to ensure other members do not read a hesitating actor as incompetent. Thus, Garfinkel’s insights to the situational accomplishment of ‘passing’ (or ‘seeing’) as a coach, further deciphers the social structures that coaches operate within.

5.4 The compliance of ‘seeing’

Ronglan and Havang (2011) suggested that the most competent coaches demonstrate awareness for what is going on both on and off the playing field. Thus far, the discussion has privileged ‘actualising’ of ‘seeing’ as an on the field activity; that is, the symbiotic relationship between instruction and evaluation. However, what was ‘seen’ was considered to be more than just on-the-field performances that informed judgements about the players. Consequently, the coaches’ ability to construct an evaluation was not only in reference to player performance but also included key ‘social’ features; for example, compliance. Therefore, a ‘good player’ could not be categorised in this way without management of the reciprocal relationship between ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting-in’. To this end, the social phenomenon of ‘seeing’ went beyond that of physical performance.

As alluded to in Chapter Four, players ‘fitting-in’ was evident at two levels; firstly, they had to be ‘seen’ to comply with instruction ‘on’ the field (see page 114), and secondly, they had to comply with expectations ‘off’ the field (for example see page 115). Both instances influenced the overall evaluations made by the coaches (and other players). The coaches’ interpretations were undoubtedly the most influential when considering team selection. In this respect, the players were still under the auspices of the coaches and, consequently, being ‘seen’ was imperative for survival. What was seen, however, was not always descriptors of performance (e.g., “second balls”) but what the player brought to the team; for example, Clive’s ability to support and protect Alex was deemed to allow him to
play better (see page 116). In this case, there were no performance ‘descriptors’ or instruction for Clive but a ‘sense-of’ his contribution to Alex’s success. The resulting complexity meant that disagreements between the coaches, and between coaches and players, frequently occurred. What is interesting here was that disagreement between coaches and players were underpinned by power. Like Cushion and Jones (2006), the instruction acted as the legitimised and valued authority. The resulting compliant athletes fulfilled the expectations of the coaches in an attempt to be ‘seen’. Such action, however, did not necessarily agree with their personal account of the performance provided (see page 128). Such a notion resonates with Garfinkel’s (1963) conception of trust. Garfinkel’s reference to trust was in relation to a commitment to interact coherently. In seeking coherent interaction, the players aimed to demonstrate the codes – a compliant, willing athlete. For Garfinkel then, to suggest:

“one person ‘trusts’ another means that the person seeks to act in such a fashion as to produce through his actions, or to respect as conditions of play, actual events that accord with normative orders of events depicted in the basic rules of play” (Garfinkel, 1963, p.193).

In doing so, the players’ compliance was in relation to the orderliness of constitutive events. However, the coaches’ evaluations were not blindly accepted (as discussed on page 128). More commonly, through hearing the original account, players could go away to understand and reify their personal account. Therefore, what was ‘seen’ in the original construction was an important competence that the coaches needed to manage. In this regard, the coaches were required to carefully select what to expose and what not to expose regarding their interpretation. In doing so, they attempted to influence and manage the compliance of the players.

In this way, the ‘brotherhood’ played an important role in the management of the different interpretations. The existing body of literature has yet to explore the fundamental experience of athletes away from coaches. To date, only Ronglan’s (2010) study of a national
The handball team attempted to appreciate the reliance of athletes upon one another. However, the brotherhood discussed in this study occupied a more significant role than on and off the field activities. This is not to claim the ‘brotherhood’ was universally supportive, as it could equally be detrimental. Rather, the ‘brotherhood’ was individual and context dependent; that is, certain athletes facilitated an important role through a second interpretation. Here, the coaches identified one or two descriptors for each of the players. The success of the player’s interpretation hinged upon the descriptors provided. However, the coaches were required to ‘see’ 11 different performances at once. The individual player on the other hand, would ‘see’ and remember everything he did. The range of possible meanings taken from that performance was constituted in and by language (Heap, 1991). For the player then, each performance hinged upon the interpretation of a few critical incidences (descriptors) and their subsequent interpretations. The importance is that the understanding of the action does not define such action (motive, intention etc.), rather the importance is in relation to the label given; that is, the defining criteria (descriptor). In turn, the action is limited to what any sign can mean within the context. Therefore, the actor is not free to act as they wish (Heap, 1980).

Within the current study, the post-performance discussions with fellow players, away from the coaches, allowed for a further construction of performance that was, due to the ‘brotherhood’, potentially more forgiving of the different perspectives and emphasis on descriptors. This is not to say that the analysis was strikingly different from that of the coaches, ‘seeing’ was intersubjective after all. Rather, the team-mates were able to construct their own ‘concrete versions’ (Liberman, 2013). The ensuing account between players was a form of social ‘healing’; that is, in light of negative appraisal from the coaches, the players supported and provided their own deconstruction forming a ‘safety net’ of being ‘seen’, away from the coaches. The purpose was that no athlete became aloof. Unfortunately for Jamie, he
was not able to negotiate the brotherhood as a result of not ‘fitting-in’. In this respect, successful negotiation into the team represented a membership to a special club of support.

The sentiment offered here provides an alternative understanding of the everyday affairs between coach and athlete. In doing so, the work builds upon Potrac and Jones’ (2009b) discussion of ‘buy-in’ from players by addressing the amalgamating conflict surrounding interpretations of performance, judgements about players, and compliance. In particular, Potrac and Jones (2009b) discussed Gavin’s ploys to select players he knew followed his principles. In the same way here, evaluating players in light of what was ‘seen’ required careful negotiation that stretched further than merely good observations (Ronglan & Havang, 2011). In Steve and Joe’s case, too much disparity between their observations and evaluations with their respective players could lead to being tarnished with a lack of comprehension. In this respect, observational work demonstrated to be an intersubjective construction (with players).

5.5 The codes as innovation

To date, literature within coaching has revealed that coaches manipulate athletes to gain their best efforts in various ways (Ronglan, 2011; Santos et al., 2013). In this regard, the codes identified in this study provided a structure to some of the fundamental details surrounding this literature: (1) The ‘play well’ code stressed the importance of individual standards; (2) ‘Fitting-in’ helped manage the compliance of the players both on and off the field; (3) The ‘brotherhood’ supported the players away from the gaze of the coaches; (4) Respecting ‘space’ was integral for the management of the previous three codes. Indeed, rather than accept the codes as mutually exclusive, the codes overlapped thus providing a degree of complexity; for instance, emphasising the ‘play well’ code did not reduce the ‘fitting in’, but
could complement the subsequent work. With this in mind, attention now turns to the manipulation of these codes and the related interactional competencies required.

The coaches manipulated the codes through interaction. In order to do so, Garfinkel (1967) would suggest that the coaches were skilled in understanding the structures they worked within, for example; concerns for the motivations of their players; sensitivities of conversation in terms of how they addressed the players (e.g., team-talks); in addition to detecting incongruities, trivial utterances or ‘tests’ of knowledge from the players. Similarly, too much athlete influence away from the coaches could result in resistance and a challenging of the coaches’ space. The discussion throughout has alluded to some of the ways the coaches managed and manipulated the codes, however, the purpose here is to explicitly discuss the codes’ manipulation within the reciprocal structures constructed between the coaches and players.

ten Have (2004) suggested that a central tenant of Garfinkel’s work is the notion of structural reciprocity; in this case, the patterned behaviour of the codes being able to maintain ways to make sense of the world (i.e. ‘respecting space’). For example, the accomplishment of seeing and thereby knowing the omni-relevant features of the game, was essential for the development of players and the team. Development in players was dependent upon the uncertain task of seeing and, therefore, accepting seeing as an interactional and procedural competence, the coaches were bound to the task of seeing. Following Livingston (2008), the instruction (descriptor) provided to the players formed a ‘direction’.

Here, Livingston (2008) examined the ‘lived-work’ of a pedestrian providing instruction to a lost driver. The subsequent interaction required the ‘direction giver’ to tie their instruction to the orientation of the driver. In this respect, the instructions provided involved ‘glossed practices’ in order to make ‘accountable’ the direction provided; that is, the infinite detail of the journey could not be included in the directions given. As a result, the
context of the speech is made apparent, yet the instructor may know “something different from what they can say in just so many words” (Garfinkel & Sack, 1970, p.342). The point made here is that, in order to arrive at their destination, drivers will not “drive straight through the roundabouts” but instead, their path is dictated by the context and road ahead which they must navigate (Livingston, 2008, p.848). Understanding the instructions as ‘descriptors’ then required a taken-for-granted competency from both pedestrian and driver (coach and player); a capacity to know, understand and interpret the instructions that were provided in the context (Liberman, 2013). Consequently, the instruction inquires whether the players have comprehensively grasped, and developed, a degree of understanding about the tasks. Liberman (2013) provided the example of when asked the question ‘do you understand?’ the point here is not whether you understand every single point that could be made regarding the topic but more appropriately:

“For the practical matter that appear to be central to our communication, and given the limits on our time and the need to use our energies in the most efficacious way, do you understand well enough for us to continue?” (Liberman, 2013, p.159)

The original descriptors provided by the coaches then, were used to guide the journey. Thus, in telling Callum to ‘stretch the game’, the instruction by the coaches merely acted as a description which Callum could orient towards. In providing this analysis of direction giving, Livingston drew heavily upon George Psathas (1991) to suggest that, directions provided are a form of theorizing about what the driver would need to do to reach his or her destination. In the case of the players in this study, the descriptors provided a pathway to ‘good’ performances. Therefore, the descriptors provided were indexical (i.e., specific to the tactics, location and individual), and for Callum, rather than remedy the indexicality of the instruction through requiring thick description, he had to orientate his performance towards the characteristics provided in the hope of being ‘seen’.
What is of interest here is the ‘in-so-many-words’ of the coaches’ instructions. The instructions provided were sufficiently detailed so that the players could understand what was required. However, an important ‘space’ for interpretation was a feature of many of the descriptors provided. The significance of this ‘space’ relates to the original purpose of the breaching experiments provided by Garfinkel (Garfinkel, 1967; Coulon, 1995). Here, what Garfinkel challenged was a preoccupation by actors to produce social order and remove any discrepancies. In doing so, individuals would interpret the actions of the other in order to restore a sense of order. When such order could not be achieved, Garfinkel (1967) highlighted participants’ anger and bewilderment. Turning to Kenneth Liberman, the example of an etcetera on the end of a shopping list is not just a minor feature, but rather a necessity for creating order; the ghost that rules the house:

“yes, there is an etcetera that is printed at the end of the list, but that is only by way of remarking that indeed there is an etcetera; however, that does not quite cover it, since the etcetera is found in, of and as every part of that list, as a feature of that list that works like this: Here are the rules of play. With respect to any rule you want to pick up, with respect to any fraction of a rule, with respect to any event, where it might arise that at some future time there could be an issue as to what it is that is being provided for – then, at that future time we will reconsider what it is that is specified here, and review what we have been doing that led us to a recognition that it must have provided for something entirely different, and to have provided for it all along, in the way we now see that it has to have been meant, and you will understand it then to have been holding before and to holding indefinitely for the future, but of course subject to the same agreement.” (Liberman, 2013, p.140)

Accepting that social life is not as stable as it appears, the importance for the Steve and Joe lay in grasping the players’ attention with the instruction given, whilst providing the ‘space’ for interpretation. Such ‘space’ was in reference to both the playing of the game and the individual contributing to the team. The competency of the coaches lay in manoeuvring the players through their descriptors so they could be executed despite various situations. In this manner, the coach can be compared to a filmmaker. For as Coulon (1995) identifies, the
competency of novelists or filmmakers lays in their mastery of the immense, irreducible indexical expressions in language. The novelist and the filmmaker who grasp our attention are able to play with such expressions by refraining from saturated discourse and in doing so, ignoring our imaginations. It is this very engagement that the coaches sought when providing instructions.

Building upon this argument, the categorisation assigned to the players informed the descriptors of performance provided. For example, Lewys was considered a striker who could ‘take a bump’. In this sense, Lewys’ category derived from a stereotypical and official description of a striker. The coaches’ knowledge of this description had been acquired and reproduced from various sources, including personal history, dominant discourse and coach education (Nelson, Groom & Potrac, 2016). Thus, ‘taking the bump’ was the gloss description for the work Lewys needed to conduct during the game. However, that very same descriptor of Lewys’ performance became the descriptor provided by the coaches to perform. The descriptor of a ‘striker’ carried its own weight in the coaches’ interpretation and therefore, delimited an ability to play alternative roles and responsibilities (Liberman, 2013). The result was a pre-occupational correctness bound to the stereotype and, therefore, ‘seeing what you expect to see’ (Rawls, 2011). Consequently, the space for interpretation of performances was an essential competence and awareness for the coaches. Innovative practice for the coaches lay in a management of the descriptors and subsequently, a management of their glossing practices. For example, Tom’s work was managed through providing specific, concise descriptors that reduced the need for his interpretive competencies. Thick description allowed Tom to execute the simplified instruction, and subsequently, be deemed as ‘playing well’. In this respect, the coaches managed the descriptors but also emphasised the ‘play well’ code by individualising Tom’s responsibilities.
The subsequent findings further illustrate the strategic work undertaken within coaching. Whether for the self or other, the coach must act in accordance with the conventions and shared understandings that already exist. For, as Liberman (2013) suggests, there is a strategic dimension to much interaction, although ‘strategic interaction’ as pure form is pure fiction. In doing so, such a perspective builds upon existing literature (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006) through demonstrating the in-situ interactional work that coaches and players require. With that said, it is essential to warn against taking Garfinkel’s work too literally; that is, the work is not technical but sociological. Therefore, as Tomlie, Benford and Rouncefield (2013) suggested, an appreciation must be given for the setting, the implication for players and the other things players do once they are there, to understand the character of their concern.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION
6.1 Introduction

I began this thesis by presenting a brief account of my first experiences of football. The purpose was to place my biography alongside the theoretical justification for the project (Corrigan, 1979). The work of Garfinkel (1967, 2002, 2006), who introduced the concept of ethnomethodology, was suggested as a new ‘lens’ to better understand coaching. Here, ethnomethodology was proposed as the ‘decoder’ of some of the everyday realities of coaching (Jones et al., 2011). Drawing upon Liberman (2013, p.140), ethnomethodology’s attention to the procedures of social order is considered “the ghost that rules the house”. In this regard, the findings presented have been an attempt to further explore the ‘taken-for-granted’ social competencies of coaches (and athletes). This investigation builds upon previous literature, suggesting Garfinkel’s (1967) writings can be used to better explore the ‘seen but unnoticed’ practices of coaching (e.g., Miller & Cronin, 2012; Thompson et al., 2015).

The justification for the project was further developed by a review of selected literature (see Chapter Two). The principal focus here was to highlight relevant literature that adopted a sociological stance towards coaching research. In doing so, the Review presented in Chapter Two was structured through a progressive ‘narrowing’ (Hart, 1998). This helped to place the study in the wider body of coaching research; namely, sociological approaches to coaching. The point made was, despite acceptance of the complexities in coaching, research has adopted various and, at times conflicting, epistemological assumptions. In terms of this project, the research design adopted was an ethnomethodological ethnography; that is, where a conversation between ethnography, which focused on setting, and ethnomethodology, which focused on the production of activity, were used to complement each other to produce rich and textured insights. The approach required me to be a fully competent member in the practices I chose to study. In accordance with Garfinkel’s (2002) unique adequacy, the
resulting fieldwork was conducted as a full participant observer. Here, I adopted various roles within a semi-professional football club including, first team player, friend, informant, mini-bus driver and researcher.

Following the 10 month season I spent at the football club, the findings presented in Chapter Four were underpinned by Wieder’s (1974) conception of ‘codes’. The ‘codes’ identified had varying explanatory levels. In keeping with a traditional sociological ethnographic explanation, the ‘codes’ accounted for regular patterns of observed behaviour. Meanwhile, an ethnomethodological focus on activity also demonstrated how members (coaches and athletes) at Bayside F.C. ‘did’ the ‘codes’. In this fashion, the ‘codes’ explained behaviour, but the ‘doing’ of behaviour explained the codes. This meant the ‘codes’ identified were used by members for sense making purposes to explain to outsiders, and themselves, the ‘social-fact’ character of their circumstances (Wieder, 1974). In turn, the codes were a documentation of the daily lives the members at Bayside deployed to make sense of each other’s’ actions; that is, the ‘codes’ ‘pointed to’ the underlying pattern of the football club (Von Lehn, 2013). In this respect, interpreted as ‘what we know’, the ‘codes’ presented illustrated the methods coaches and athletes used to account for social order. Consequently, the findings complement and develop current conceptions of coaching (see Chapter Five).

In terms of structure, this final chapter revisits the aims and objectives of the research before providing a summary of the main findings. The findings demonstrate the ‘sense-making’ procedures of coaches and players. Therefore, I propose that ethnomethodological insights to coaching can be further used to challenge, develop and educate coaches and educators. That said, despite the project unearthing new lines of inquiry, there remain questions akin to ‘blank spaces’ in our theorisation of coaching (Jones et al., 2011). The Chapter continues by suggesting some potentially fruitful avenues for further investigation.
Finally, the thesis is drawn to a close by revisiting the experiences encountered conducting the project.

6.2 Revisiting the research aim and objectives

Following the writings of Harold Garfinkel, the principal aim of this research project was to explore and deconstruct coaches’ and athletes’ everyday interactions. In doing so, specific attention was paid to the properties of conduct at Bayside Rovers F.C., through observing the contextual conditions under which such behaviours occurred. The project aimed to investigate how coaches and athletes used and manipulated their ‘social competencies’ to achieve desired ends (Lemert, 1997): that is, how the coaches managed, manipulated and influenced face-to-face interactions and context to improve the learning and development of athletes (Jones et al., 2004). The aims were addressed through the following objectives:

a) To consider the importance of ‘indexical expressions’ (Garfinkel 1967, p.4) and shared social understandings to coaching practice. How did social actors get there? And what did these shared understandings look like?

b) To explore how coaches manipulated social and contextual interactions. How did the evidenced interactions and context affect each other? How were these interactions negotiated?

c) To examine the consequences of when shared understandings within the context were disrupted. How was the workable (negotiated) consensus re-established? Which power forces were at work, and how were they manifest?
6.3 A summary of the research findings

The theoretical foundation for this research project was principally bound to the work of Harold Garfinkel and ethnomethodology. The project adopted an ethnomethodological ethnographic research design to explore the ‘social competence’ of members within Bayside Rovers F.C. (Lemert, 1997). Drawing upon ethnographic methods, ethnomethodology’s close attention to the ‘sense making’ activities of individuals was used to study what it is that coaches really ‘do’ and ‘see’ (Rawls, 2006). Here, a consideration of the importance of ‘indexical expressions’ was provided throughout the analysis. This position has been an attempt to assert that coaching arises in and through ‘accountable-social-action’ (Wieder, 1974).

In spite of previous accusations that coaching research has depicted an ‘unmanageable complexity’ (North, 2013), the sociological grounding for this study identified ‘codes’ which acted as a “text to be read, understood and interpreted on its own merits” (Atkinson, 2002, p.131). The subsequent ‘codes’ presented comprised structures of how interactions were managed and produced by the members of Bayside Rovers F.C. In this respect, the ‘codes’ guided the communicative details and contextual background which informed the coaches and players of Bayside. This framework provided an understanding of how contextual inferences were possible for coach and player actions (Garfinkel, 2002). However, this work does not presume we know what ‘the social is’. Rather, as Livingston (2008, p.243) tells us, we must aim to “discover the social in and as the technical” and, therefore, practitioners must aim to recognise and identify the details of specific reasoning within their particular context.

In this respect, accepting that social order is fundamental to the act of coaching, the findings presented specifically attended to some of the ways coaches ‘actualised’ their work at Bayside; that is, how the coaches addressed players, provided instruction, made observations, selected players and more. Consequently, the work resembles an attempt to
‘discover’ the features of the ‘lived work’ of the coaches, and examines their work in increasing detail (Liberman, 2013). To help conceptualise the findings and add a layer of complexity, the notion of a helix was offered as a diagrammatic map. Here, the findings were split into three main strands, which developed in a progressive format. The first strand, the ‘codes’, formed a description of ‘what’ occurred within the contextual environment. The second strand, manipulating the codes, depicted ‘how’ the codes were used (‘done’) by the members. The final strand offered an explanation for contextual actions and, therefore, the ‘why’ things happened in the way they did.

In terms of the ‘what’, the four codes identified explained, and were explained by, the ‘visible-and-reportable’ interactions. The codes included, ‘play-well’, ‘fitting-in’, the ‘brotherhood’ and ‘respecting space’. These codes intertwined, overlapped and were continually (re)negotiated to allow for the everyday coherence of the football club. The first code identified was that of ‘play well’. This code related to the specific performances each individual had to give, or be deemed to achieve, in the eyes of the coaches to warrant selection. The players involved at the football club were aware that specific performance levels had to be reached and maintained, which resulted in a hierarchy developing from team selection. Here, the performance based environment meant that the coaches strived to select the ‘best’ players in the hope of producing desired team results. Team selection acted as an indicator of who was deemed to be ‘playing well’.

Having said that, assessing performance levels as an individual ‘on-the-field’ activity was too simplistic. Individual success did not ensure team success. Instead, players were required to ‘fit’ within the team and, subsequently, a second reciprocal code was identified labelled ‘fitting-in’. Related to ‘playing well’, this code had two connotations; firstly, an individual had to ‘fit’ in terms of their performances with the other players. The coaches recognised that combining and complementing players was an integral aspect of ‘good’
performances and, therefore, influenced the coaches’ decisions regarding if a player was ‘playing well’. For example, an attacking player individually executing their role of stretching the game would mean the midfielders behind could carry out their respective role. This meant ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting in’ were reciprocal; that is, an individual performance was reliant on the contributions of those around.

However, the importance of individuals ‘fitting-in’ stretched to both ‘on’ and ‘off’ the field. The second connotation, then, meant a player must ‘fit’ with the expectations of the coaches and fellow players outside of playing. For example, one player, Phil, was deemed to ‘play well’ consistently, but struggled to ‘fit-in’ as he failed to meet the commitment expectations of coaches and players. As a result, whilst the two codes were reciprocal, Phil’s actions placed a continual tension on his selection for the team. The tension between the two codes formed an intricate relationship for the coaching staff and players of Bayside; that is, when asserting that an individual became more influential, the coaches knew that the player must work alongside the team to achieve those standards. A resulting tug on the ‘play well’ code, emphasising individuality, held the paradoxical potential to improve collegiality. Thus, the continual negotiation between individuality (playing well) and team-togetherness (fitting-in) was heavily influenced by, and influenced, the decisions of the coaching staff (e.g., regarding team selection).

The third code, labelled the ‘brotherhood’, formed an extension of the ‘fitting-in’ code. Here, the ‘brotherhood’ related to the interactions between players ‘off’ the pitch. Although it was identified that a bond existed between the players, this was not a universal bond shared among the whole team. Rather, the ‘brotherhood’ was constructed by specific relationships and connections players built with each other. In this way, the ‘brotherhood’ referred to particular ‘cliques’ of players within the team. This code was significant because the ‘brotherhood’ was an influential aspect of interactions away from the coaches. The
'brotherhood' could be supportive and complementary to the coaches’ work; for example, after a public berating, a player could seek the support of his ‘brothers’ to help deconstruct his performance. This allowed the players an opportunity to ‘heal’ and return with little interruption to the next performance (e.g., training session).

The final code, labelled ‘respecting space’, referred to the position an individual occupied within the football club, including both coaches and players. The uncertainty of the environment meant players continually strived to improve their space (position) through ‘playing well’. However, the players were required to conform to the hierarchy that existed; for example, respecting the decisions on team selection through respecting the ‘space’ between coaching staff and themselves. Whilst this meant that the interactions between coaching staff and players were regulated, there was an ever-present expectation that players would try to improve their contribution to the team and, consequently, their space (position) within the team. The players did this through ‘playing well’ and ‘fitting in’.

The detail of this work was further developed by addressing ‘how’ the codes were ‘done’; that is, paying specific attention to the ‘accountability’ and ‘intelligibility’ produced by the members (Garfinkel, 1967). For example, the findings examined ‘how’ a player, who was deemed to ‘play well’, had to be ‘seen’ by the coach. The judgement, however, was not an independent (visual) act of observation, where a good or bad performance could be simply labelled and acted upon. Rather, the visual competence of the coaches had to be ‘actualised’ through orderly interaction (with other coaches or players). This meant the subsequent observation was socially constructed and the diagnosis provided was made ‘accountable’ through a process of ‘inter-concatenation’ (Liberman, 2013). Here, snippets of performances were identified, known as ‘descriptors’, to construct the coaches’ diagnosis of the performance. In doing so, the retrospective diagnosis was made coherent, recognisable and accountable to the others (e.g., coach or athlete) so that what was originally ‘seen’ could be...
understood (Garfinkel, 1967; Liberman, 2013). This meant the resultant interpretation of what was ‘seen’ was bound to the non-negotiate procedures of the coaches’ interactions.

As previously suggested by Ronglan and Havang (2011), what was ‘seen’ by the coaches was fundamental to the judgements, evaluations and actions of coaches and players. For the coaches to manipulate, emphasise and disguise decisions made, they had to competently ‘see’ the players and express what had been ‘seen’ coherently. This ethnomethodological analysis of everyday coaching endeavours, paying specific attention to the procedures of social order, has attempted to appreciate a descriptive vacuum in the analysis of coaching. Unlike previous literature (e.g., Abraham & Collins, 2011), ‘seeing’ performance is thus not viewed as a cognitive individual decision-making process to be engaged with; in fact, as Lynch (2013) identified, ‘seeing’ has very little to do with ‘vision-in-general’. Rather, observation is an inter-subjective negotiation made available through the interactional practices of coaching; such as, a routine post-game team-talk. This finding has re-specified ‘observation’, not as a visual capacity, but as an interpretive competence residing in the confines of social order.

Building upon the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the codes, three further strands of the helix were identified to help explain why the coaches approached the ‘sense-making’ practices as they did; that is, seeking control, security and insecurity. Each of these strands helped to explain the context of the coaches’ interactions. For example, what the coaches ‘saw’ was inevitably linked to the previous instructions and feedback provided to the players. The original feedback guided what was seen and, consequently, what ‘controlled’ the decisions made by the player; that is, the player had to be seen ‘executing’ the original instruction provided. In this regard, the coaches controlled the players, as they would ‘see’ what they wanted to ‘see’ (Rawls, 2005). This was, therefore, a competence in itself to continually achieve coherent observations and instructions for the players.
In conclusion, the findings of this study have been constructed from my experience in the field. The ‘codes’ identified at Bayside are accounts of social order. Such accounts illustrate the valued outcomes (e.g., performance) of members that required complex organisation to ‘actualise’ such bodies of knowledge. The ‘codes’ simultaneously identified and explained the particular events which occurred in the coaching milieu. Whilst the ‘codes’ presented here were used for deductive explanation, their relevance was taken from their explanatory uses and the situations witnessed in concrete settings (Wieder, 1974). The ‘codes’ are, as Garfinkel described, the ‘Haecceity’ (‘thisness’) of the coaches’ competence; that is, how the coaches and players repeatedly ‘did’ coaching and playing. It is, therefore, important to recognise the description offered derived from my experiences and interpretations. However, in order to ‘see’ what I have tried to convey within this ethnomethodological ethnography, I, like Garfinkel, encourage the reader to ‘do’ them (Quéré, 2012); that is, to identify the procedural competencies required of coaches to actualise their everyday coaching practice. Such taken-for-granted procedural knowledge “leaves open for readers” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.89) an examination of how we are able to get things done (e.g., for a coach to ‘see’ performance).

6.4 Moving forward: Implications of the research findings

The phenomenological roots of this ethnomethodologically informed ethnography are an attempt to return attention within coaches’ everyday work to the ‘thing itself’ (Heap, 1980). In this regard, the study can be described as being ‘of’ rather than ‘about’ coaching (Garfinkel et al., 1981); that is, an attempt to address some of the fundamental activities which make the occupation of coaching significant in the first place. This examination of the coaches’ and players’ everyday practices revealed the frequently glossed and concealed social competencies referred to by Lemert (1997). Whilst the work builds upon existing
coaching literature (e.g., Jones et al., 2004; Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2012), it is contended that it can also considerably influence practice. The purpose of the next section is to articulate and expand upon this claim.

Firstly, in order to ‘get by’, the ‘codes’ helped to decipher the structures the coaches operated within in their everyday lives. Following Garfinkel’s attention to the finite details of ‘doing’ interaction, coaches and scholars are invited to ‘read’ themselves into the sense-making structures that inform their practice; that is, the shared understandings (‘codes’) of behaviours and actions (Garfinkel, 1967; Wieder, 1974). In this respect, such ‘codes’ are not entirely unique to the club under study (Bayside F.C.). Rather, they reflect wider communal structures of performance environments. For example, the codes identified in this study, such as the combination between the ‘play well’ and ‘fitting in’, have been evidenced in previous literature (e.g., Cushion & Jones, 2006; Purdy et al., 2009). The significance of the findings presented, therefore, can be used to examine the structures of compliance that inform the manipulative strategies coaches engage with and in (e.g., Potrac & Jones, 2009b).

Furthermore, the investigation represents a ‘respecification’ (Garfinkel, 1967) of our understanding of coaching. Here, the attention turns to the concrete practices which allowed for the codes to be ‘done’. In this regard, the management strategies often employed to hide undesirable characteristics, knowledge, doubts and insecurities require procedural competence to produce recognised social orderliness; a competence that stretches beyond the immediate. For example, the ethnomethodological respecification of coach ‘observations’ (‘playing well’), while appearing to be visual, has demonstrated that observations are socially ‘accomplished’ (Lynch, 2013). The significance of this is underlined when considering that much of the time coaches spend during practice is ‘non-intervention’. Consequently, the importance is not to grasp the cognitive processes of where, why and what coaches are engaging with at this time. Rather, this study has demonstrated the significance of the
‘visible-and-observable’ procedures ‘of’ coaches when making an observation ‘accountable’ (Garfinkel, 1967); that is, how coaches interacted to make intelligible their ‘non-intervention’ work. Here, whilst the procedures to make an observation ‘accountable’ are local to the setting, the emphasis placed on the language and social interaction opens up completely new fields of investigation, while raising profound and complex questions about the nature of speech, speaking, and other forms of communication (Heritage, 1987).

If ‘seeing’ performance demonstrates coach observations as a social competence that must be ‘done’, and accepting that observation is fundamental to the work of coaches (e.g., Ronglan & Havang, 2011), the findings provide an informative platform for coaches to explore and challenge their current procedural competencies which are deployed to ‘do’ observations. The aim here is to question and transform what coaches ‘see’ for more contextually nuanced understandings. For example, a detailed (re)examination of a ‘post-game team-talk’ may allow coaches to question and develop more reflexive awareness of the feedback they provide and, consequently, what they will ‘see’ in the future. Rather than concentrate on the instruction, the attention turns to the orderliness of the team-talk created.

More specifically, this awareness could be facilitated by Garfinkel’s (2002) ‘purposeful misreading’ of ‘concrete’ settings. In this instance, similar to a student tutorial in which Garfinkel (2002) encouraged actors (students) to ‘misread’ a text or fragment of text, a coach can attempt to provide an ‘alternative reading’ of what was ‘seen’. Garfinkel’s purpose was not for his students to make an erroneous reading of the text that was so extreme others could not recognise the interpretation, but neither should the reading be synonymous with the text point for point, line by line. Rather, Garfinkel suggested that the two readings should be ‘incommensurable’. However, in doing so, he advocated that the ‘alternative’ reading should ‘go together’. In this way, a coach’s misreading of a text (e.g., a post-game team-talk) could be a strategy for developing insight for coaches to find the ‘what’s more’ (Liberman, 2013).
The point made here, is that coaches could endeavour to understand more than the ‘descriptor’ provided (e.g., stretch the game). For example, a traditional football formation could be ‘misread’ as horizontal, across the pitch, rather than vertical. This would change the original formation played, such as 4-4-2, to 2-3-3-2. Whilst the formation could still ‘go together’, the subsequent interpretation from the coach is challenged, leading the coach to question what is ‘seen’. A further example of the coach challenging what is ‘seen’ in the players would be to feedback completely in relation to the opponent. The concern is to produce a coherent account that ‘sees’ how the opposition player reacts, as opposed to the player selected. The aim for coaches is to harness creativity within their observations through developing innovative accounts of what is ‘seen’. Whilst this is a brief example, the argument is for coaches to adopt Garfinkel’s student tutorials to act as an “aid to a sluggish imagination” (vom Lehn, 2013, p.77).

The consequent attention to social order can be used for coaches to reflect upon the glosses (i.e., descriptors of performance) which currently infiltrate their evaluations of performances. The implications of this argument stretch further than coach evaluations to include better understanding the influence of assistant coaches, a respecification of talent identification whilst could also influence teaching practice. Here, the investigation of how members (e.g., coaches) ‘actualise’ what they have ‘seen’ in a performance can complement the pedagogic strategy of ‘noticing’ (Mason, 2002). As previously explored and linked to the notion of orchestration, the coaches of Santos et al. (2013) contextually manipulated actors for ‘best efforts’. However, Jones et al. (2013) recognised that, in order to do so, the opportunity to act appropriately must be ‘noticed’. In turn, the ethnomethodological attention of ‘seeing’ offered in this study provides an empirical starting point to widen the base of what is ‘noticed’. Through analysing the visible, tangible and contextual details of how ‘noticing’ is accomplished, coaches’ accounts can be challenged to add empirical depth; that is, what
the “subtle ripple of familiar waters” actually mean (Jones et al., 2013, p.276). Consequently, the following line of inquiry impacts upon our understanding of the relationship between interaction and observation that allow coaches to construct what requires attention.

The work of Harold Garfinkel (and ethnomethodology) has been used in this thesis to ‘shed light’ on new and untouched ground within coaching research. Embracing the writings of Garfinkel has proved a difficult yet rewarding task. Garfinkel, previously criticised for his unique and ‘peculiar’ writing, spent a considerable amount of time defining and locating his work as a social theorist. In fact, Lemert (2002) described Garfinkel’s lasting contributions as ‘truly impressive’. The current study has moved Garfinkel’s reach into the discipline of coaching through providing a unique insight into the everyday accomplishments of coaches. As a consequence, the study contributes to our theoretical understanding and ‘respecification’ of coaching practice.

However, despite the ostensible merits of utilising the writings of Garfinkel to decipher the ‘rational properties of conduct’ in coaching, adopting a mono-theoretical perspective is not without its limitations. Here, use of a single theorist, it can be argued, has inevitably ‘narrowed’ the scope and shape of the project (Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). On the other hand, it certainly enabled an in-depth analysis of social practice; one that allowed a considerable deconstruction, complete with using ‘follow up’ notions, to better understand how coaches act out their ethno-methods. Utilising a plethora of theorists, while widening the social lens, would not have provided such focussed analysis (Jones et al., 2011; Stones, 1998). In this respect, plurality was somewhat sacrificed for intellectual depth.

6.5 Where next? Future recommendations
In this study I have attempted to ‘shed light’ on new, untouched territory in coaching research by exploring how coaches ‘do’ their social competencies. However, the theoretical

186
application provided in this study has only drawn upon a small fragment of Garfinkel and ethnomethodology’s writings. For that reason, I believe, like others (e.g., Miller & Cronin, 2012), ethnomethodology’s scope can surpass the contributions of this project. Additional analysis through Garfinkel’s writings could yield more interesting results which place the everyday ‘competence’ of the coach (and athlete) at the heart of the activity. For instance, Garfinkel’s (1956) work on ‘degradation ceremonies’, as demonstrated in Thompson et al. (2015), holds the potential to further illuminate the manipulative strategies inherent in coaching (e.g., Potrac et al., 2012). Here, through combining ethnomethodological insight with the micro-political work of Potrac and colleagues, the resulting work would build upon existing understanding of coaching as a contested and politically charged arena (e.g., Potrac et al., 2012; Miller & Cronin, 2012).

Relatedly, Garfinkel’s work holds further potential to develop our understanding of coaching through exploring Garfinkel’s (1963) conception of trust (introduced in Chapter Five, p.162). Here, Garfinkel’s perspective of trust is unlike traditional psychological approaches to the notion, which advocate that trust is a trait to be ‘built up’ between actors for ‘good’ coach athlete relationships (Gyllenten & Palmer, 2007). Rather, Garfinkel asserted trust as a fundamental construct of social order; that is, members’ trust ‘of’ producing social order, as opposed to trust shared ‘between’ the members. Yet, despite being a fundamental topic within sociology, trust has been an underexplored area of coaching (Ronglan, 2011). Therefore, Garfinkel’s work can be used as a ‘lens’ to further explore, not just trust in the creation of social order, but as the ‘haecceity’ (thisness) of coach and athlete interaction (Lynch, 2013).

Following this line of investigation, Garfinkel’s notion of trust could be used to further explore how the “forces of social attraction” are constructed when asserting coaching as exchange between coach and athlete (Jones & Bailey, 2011, p.109). Here, Jones and
Bailey (2011) drew upon Blau’s conception of micro-sociological processes of reciprocity, in other words, the give and take of a relationship. In doing so, the authors referred to the unspecified trust required for social exchange to occur. For that reason, the construction of trust appears to be a central concept behind the competence of coaches (and athletes). With that in mind, Garfinkel’s (1963) conception of trust in social order could be a fruitful avenue to further understanding coaching competence and coaching as an exchange.

Garfinkel has criticised sociology for treating indexicality as an obstacle, and ignoring ‘the thing itself’ (Heap, 1980). However, as many coaches (and I, see 3.9) can contest, the coaching environment is often an emotionally charged arena (e.g., Jones, 2006, 2009; Potrac & Marshell, 2011; Potrac et al., 2012). Despite Garfinkel not focusing explicitly on the emotional investment in reality construction, to claim he ignored the role of emotions would be misleading (Kemper, 1990). In this regard, Garfinkel’s (1967) breaching experiments are an example of the emotional response individuals express when their construction of social reality is questioned. In these cases, rather than reacting to a world which is there, individuals expressed anger, confusion and bewilderment (becoming red faced and stating, “you know what I mean!”) when expectations were not fulfilled. Therefore, if emotions are to be explored as a manipulative commodity produced and sold in coaching (Potrac & Marshell, 2011), then further exploration of emotions exhibited in the construction of everyday coaching practice is required. To date, the coaching process does not appreciate our understanding of emotions until they are communicated (Ronglan & Havang, 2011, p.84). Therefore, adopting an ethnomethodological analytical perspective could develop a more detailed understanding of emotions as a constructed social phenomenon. In so doing, the contextual decisions made by coaches and the inter-subjective values created between coach and athlete could be better understood; that is, the ‘felt but unnoticed’.
Furthermore, ethnomethodology has been depicted as an empirical and descriptive science of ‘social processes’. However, McHoul (1998) suggested that ethnomethodology’s attention to local *in situ* practices offers unique insight to how actors ‘come-to-be’. For example, drawing upon Garfinkel and Wieder (1992), a phone ringing is not just an audio sound (‘ring’, ‘ring’) but has presence in a specific way depending on the individual within the scene (e.g., a person expecting the call). The same concept applies to observing a sporting performance; that is, the immediately witnessed performance of an individual (or team) comes to presence for different people observing depending upon the context. The subsequent relationship between the ‘seer’ and the ‘seen’ could be explored in further detail. In this regard, the phenomenological work of Merleau-Ponty could be used to help develop our understanding.

More specifically, the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, explored how objectivity and subjectivity are indistinguishable (Mearleau-Ponty, 1968). His assertion, titled “The Intertwining – The chiasm,” recognised any engagement with the thing, in this case the coach’s observation, involves components of subjectivity and objectivity, and that observation (vision), despite the object (e.g., the players, the field) appearing objective, can never relinquish the involvement of the observer (Liberman, 2013). According to Merleau-Ponty (1968), what is objectively there can only be engaged through a subjective bodily engagement. Merleau-Ponty offers the example of a figure on a background displaying more qualities than initially given. The background is limitless, uncertain following beneath the figure, yet the background possesses a particular sense; a different part of the whole. It has ‘contours’ that do not ‘belong’ to the background but stand out from it. What the contours mean and what they border, rejects any distinction between the self and the world. The importance, according to Landes (2013, p.166), is that “I am of the world to which I open”; we are nevertheless not the world. This means that even a vision of ourselves in a mirror is
always mediated by body image and, consequently, we cannot clearly look at our own body image (Landes, 2013).

According to Merleau-Ponty (1968, p.139) then, there is an “adhesion of the seer and the visible” which means the seer is bound to what is seen. The seer is engaged in a fundamental narcissism, yet for the coach to make better observations of players, we suggest that he/she must escape from narcissism. The point made here is, in order to make more informed observations, we must better appreciate how objectivity and subjectivity are employed in our understanding (Liberman, 2013). We see things the way they are, but that does not make what is ‘seen’ universal (objective) and, importantly, it does not address how the other (subjectively) ‘sees’. In this regard, Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) phenomenological work recognised the body as an indispensable medium for communication and meaning. Thus, like art, sport performance transcends language and, despite what appear to be concrete accounts of observations, the work alludes to an investigation of the ‘unaccounted’ within the ‘accountable’. In this regard, a phenomenological investigation may concern more than what the coach had ‘seen’ (or can see), which is ‘about’ the athlete, but to understand the ‘lived experiences’ of the athlete.

Finally, it is worth noting that the subsequent body of ethnomethodological research inspired by Garfinkel’s work has commonly explored social order through the use of video. Visual methods (e.g., video recordings and photographs) are given credence as a way to document the nuanced and immense details required for social orderliness. Previous examples in sport which have married visual methods with ethnomethodological analysis include Fele (2008) and Tomlie and Rouncefield (2013). At this point, however, it is worth considering that the case for visual methods within sports coaching has value but in a different fashion (e.g., Edwards & Jones, 2016). Here, Jones and Edwards reflected upon the use of visual methods as reassurance for the researcher, to sharpen the ethnographic eye, as
opposed to a resource for collecting data. Visual methods then, hold the potential to provide more subtle intricate insights of social life (Spencer, 2011). In this regard, visual methods can be used to complement the thinking of C. Wright Mills’ (1959) ‘sociological imagination’. This may come in the form of varying techniques ranging from camera photos and video recordings to sketches and television (Banks, 2001). In this way, coaching scholars could benefit from the complementary use of visual methods to garner more intricate analysis of social order.

6.6 The research journey: Closing thoughts

Throughout the thesis I have illustrated my personal investment in this project and, in doing so, highlighted the importance of the researcher’s biography in the research process. Therefore, it is fitting that I conclude by summarising some of the experiences I encountered along the ‘journey’. The significance of this reflection is twofold. Firstly, Ph.D. study is a consuming experience and, for that reason, I aim to provide an expressive account of the transition I encountered over the course of the project. I hope this reflection will stand as documentation of ‘where I was’ in the years to come. The second purpose is to put pen-to-paper to recognise the importance of my experiences throughout this period of research. The intention echoes earlier writings (e.g., Jones, 2006, 2009; Potrac et al., 2012) in expressing and sharing my experiences so that others may relate. The argument echoes Blackman (2007), who identified that such accounts hold the potential to further illuminate the ‘hidden’ aspects of the research process. This is in opposition to depicting research as a ‘mechanical’ step-by-step procedure, which is still evident in many research texts. Therefore, following Chapter Three, where I voiced some of the dynamics of conducting fieldwork (3.9), this final reflection will briefly explore my interrelated ‘journey’ within this project.
At the age of 6, I struggled to read; I was disengaged at school and subsequently dismissed as ‘lazy’. Much to my father’s disapproval, the explanation did not sufficiently account for my lack of progress. A few private tests later, I was categorised with dyslexia. The result was a change of school. Although Dad may have been a parent seeking the best for his child, I believe his refusal to accept the label was a significant effort to ‘see’ more in the individual (me). My subsequent educational pathway has been bumpy, challenging and demanding. However, the decision to remain in education has had a profound influence on my development.

Following a rocky start, I’m sure any thoughts my parents had of post-graduate education were non-existent. Yet, several years on, I was faced with a new issue. I was left with a good honours degree and nowhere to go. In a saturated market, the prospect of an immediate job in sport, particularly in football coaching, was limited, daunting and a confusing time. My pathway was further blurred by the financial constraints of postgraduate education. Obscure pockets of funding appeared inaccessible while there was a growing weight of expectancy from friends and family that, following graduation, I would ‘get a job’. At this point, Professor Robyn Jones offered a new avenue of opportunity; a research based degree. I had a curiosity for research inspired by undergraduate study and, although my subsequent choice was not well understood, it provided the flexibility I needed to manage postgraduate education. If I’m honest, I was also convinced by the thought of ‘a PhD’; I liked the sound of it. In spite of the lack of clarity, a number of staff members at the university were extremely supportive of postgraduate research. I was sold.

Following enrolment, I was under the impression I had instantaneously been elevated into the higher echelons of the academic community. The time I spent with my supervisors increased and I began to develop new academic acquaintances across various disciplines. I
will always remember a haphazard conversation I had with a visiting professor from the area. The professor was well respected and began asking what I was doing. I eagerly replied, “I’m doing a PhD.” A sense of pride filled my response; I felt a certain level of respect was associated with the ‘pathway’. He then asked, “What are you looking at, Charlie?” This was not the first time I had been asked the question, but the words vanished from my grasp. “Garfinkel”, “breaching experiment” and “coaching” fumbled out, with the same lack of coherence. I shrank instantly. I remained motionless. Butterflies swirled around my stomach; embarrassment oozed as my cheeks began to glow. After a moment’s silence, he turned to me, “Don’t worry, I still don’t know what I did mine in”. His words eased my discomfort. The reality was, however, I had no idea what I was ‘doing’. The question has since pervaded the last three years of my life, posed by family, friends, new acquaintances and colleagues. Although I would like to believe my rehearsed response is more coherent now, every time I am asked, my memory spirals back to that very moment. It helps me to question what it is I am really ‘doing’.

Following this encounter, it soon became apparent that post-graduate work was not as ‘fanciful’ as I had previously envisaged; I was naive to the disciplined quality of work expected. The point made here is that, in order to reach the quality of work expected, I had to reconceptualise what I was ‘doing’ beyond a step-by-step research process, but as a way of thinking. The problem, however, was that I had no idea what this was or how to get there. In addition, the academic sophistication I previously envisaged became grounded by the fact I was still a ‘student’ and without a ‘proper job’. In turn, I sacrificed several late nights each week in a local hotel to try and stay financially stable. The demand of holding down full-time education, a part-time job and to maintain playing football frequently tested my motivation on all three fronts. Here, my experience of post-graduate life was as much about learning the requirements of research excellence, as they were of ‘staying afloat’. I believe these
experiences were (and are) authentic, and reflective of the reality of ‘doing’ research; whatever the constraints, financial, family and academic, research is often conducted between the lives of researchers. This is not to claim research is reduced in priority. Rather, the engagement with research, like coaching, was and is continuous; it is never complete, it is rarely the priority but it never slips below being the priority. In this way, I learnt that the time for research must be carefully constructed, engineered and cherished. In fact, many of the moments of clarity regarding this project have been realised during the mundane and innocuous activities of everyday life. For example, I have woken in the middle of the night several times to make faint notes on my phone (particularly during fieldwork) to capture the sparks of serendipitous realisation. The point made here is that engaging with the level of thinking required of and for high quality research necessitates personal and intellectual investment.

I have been fortunate to be guided by a few notable ‘critical friends’ throughout this project. These scholars were influential in socialising me into a regular and more productive working regime, helped with any bureaucratic struggles I faced and, even provided access to some teaching, which incidentally added to the struggles of managing time. Nevertheless, the increased time I spent with these scholars highlighted their investment in research; that is, the physical and intellectual time spent working on a project was ‘eye-opening’ to the scope and depth of what high quality research entailed.

The exploratory nature of the project meant life as a research student ebbed and flowed. Working life was highly independent and reading often created more confusion. A sense of elation accompanied a (written) chapter leaving the desk for supervisor deconstruction. Meanwhile, the returned draft, covered in ‘red pen’, was a deflating reminder that I was not reaching the standards I had envisaged. The act of writing was a particularly difficult task in this regard. Whilst O’Connor (1985) reminded me that writing is not just a
product but a process of discovery and enlightenment, every draft held an assessment of where I was and if I was closer to the level of thinking I was searching for. As the time went by, handing over drafts became more difficult; I found it harder to ‘let go’. The development of a ‘critical voice’ in my writing was accompanied by a sense of vulnerability. As the thesis stands now, this is what I will be judged on and will be the assurance of my ‘worth’. Trying to conclude this work then, my fingers feel heavier, I am filled with more (self) doubt and insecurity about each draft. The naivety surrounding my initial decision to conduct ‘research’ has been replaced by necessity; I now need this work to stand any chance of progression in academia. Yet, each amendment has become more onerous than the last; the work is harder to hand over through fear of not being able to reach the expectations set.

This feeling resembles the ‘insecurity’ I expressed during my fieldwork. In this regard, insecurity has not been refined to just fieldwork but infiltrates the whole research process. I use the term not in reference to a psychological condition that has affected my mental state. Rather, the term is in relation to not knowing how I, as a researcher, make ‘accountable’ the level of my work; “how will my work be read?”, “is this well written?”, and “have I really grasped this?” I am not a contemporary trained sociologist, which meant learning aspects of sociology anew, such as Garfinkel (among others), was a difficult task to digest. Many times I read and re-read passages in a hope for a ‘Eureka’ moment. Yet, the reality was that the scope or depth of my understanding was simply not enough. The insecurity I felt was exaggerated by an uncertainty and doubt over where I was going, where the project was going, and would I really be able to reach the level of thinking I aspired to.

I am now at the end of the project and the same feeling of insecurity has not disappeared. Letting go of this work remains a large hurdle. However, I have come to (re)conceptualise my discomfort and insecurity of ‘doing’ research as a catalyst to reach new levels of thinking. In this way, the level of thinking is not a destination to arrive at (level
eight), but an on-going struggle for new ground. The long nights in hotels, doubts over PhD study, re-reading paragraphs and re-shaping drafts have been a fundamental challenge to wrestle with and develop. This continues a challenging and demanding task but one I am thankful for.

Whilst the continual challenge for development and progress is the essence of research, its ‘taken-for-granted’ nature ignores the reliance of a project on the accomplishment of social order ‘between’ researchers. In this respect, I am indebted to Robyn for providing me this opportunity, for ‘seeing’ something in me and, for relentlessly working with me, both academically and personally. Consequently, Garfinkel’s (1967) ‘seen but unnoticed’ practices would suggest this has not been incidental. Rather, our relationship, in its many guises, has been constructed and developed over time. In this way, I believe research should be lived and the researcher must endeavour to recognise the social competency required to construct understanding; what I now ‘see’ is different. My understanding has been ‘re-specified’ as a result of working alongside Robyn with this project. Therefore, whilst I must recognise the interactional competencies to construct our discussions, to fully appreciate this project requires a careful attention to the simple, yet fundamental interactions that underpinned the developments between Robyn and I. In this regard, I offer a narrative concerning and somewhat encapsulating the sentiment of this very section:

Robyn: “So, Corsb, is this you almost done?” (Smirking, whilst passing a draft hand-out)

Me: “I’m getting there, a few more late nights”

Robyn: “Just get on with it... Go through the writing, there are a few areas that need tidying up and try not to lose any clarity. What about this as well…” (Robyn takes the hand-out and moves to this section of the conclusion) “Is ‘Professor Robyn Jones’ how you see me?”
Me: “No, but you as a Professor provided the opportunity. You ‘saw’ something in me and provided the opportunity to conduct the research.” (I pause and consider my words carefully)

Robyn: “OK... You don’t need to tell me how you saw me then but, as it stands, this section could be clearer. How do you ‘see’ things now? [Short pause] I read this section as if the supervisor and student relationship is detached and could even be interpreted as a long distance one. You don’t have to change it but you should consider what you mean by ‘indebted’ and how that reflects the way you see the project.”

Me: “hmm, yes. I will revisit this section.” (I nod and re-read the section in silence)

The short extract resembles the commonplace discussions which occurred throughout the project and, in doing so, provides an insight to the negotiation to ‘see’ on behalf of the student and supervisor (the coach and athlete). Thus, despite Robyn and I occupying various roles throughout the project, the research hinged upon the accomplishment of such conversations; that is, the competence to discuss, deconstruct and develop ideas. In light of such consideration, I urge supervisors, coaches and teachers alike to pay the upmost attention to the details of how their interactions with students are accomplished and what they ‘see’ both in their charges and any subsequent unfolding work. It is this ‘taken-for-granted’ work that Robyn and I have engaged with continuously over the past five years that has provided me the opportunity to develop and pursue a project that has been fruitful on research, intellectual and personal fronts.

To finish, I believe the findings I have constructed have helped to better conceptualise the struggles and contradictions omnipresent within my coaching in particular, and coaching per se more generally. What I have found myself returning to is Garfinkel’s (1967) ‘respecification’ of the ‘seen-but-unnoticed’ features of everyday coaching life. These are the everyday competencies that allow us to get by in our lives, but they are also the here-and-now competencies that provide insights to challenge and problematize practice. Unpacking the
order of coaching in this way, it is on-going intention to keep challenging what I ‘see’ in mundane everyday activities.
Reference List


Dant, T., & Wheaton, B. (2007). Windsurfing: an extreme form of material and embodied interaction? Anthropology Today, 23(6), 8-12


Appendix A: Informed consent and information

CARDIFF MET PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Reference Number:

Participant name or Study ID Number:

Title of Project: To explore the everyday social rules within coaching

Name of Researcher: Charlie Corsby

___________________________________________________________________

Please mark each box with a Y for Yes and N for No.

1. I confirm that I understand the nature of this project and why I have been selected to participate in it.

2. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider the information given, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

3. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

4. I agree to any interviews and focus groups being audio recorded.

5. I agree to coaching sessions being observed.

6. I understand that there will be video/ audio recordings of everyday actions of participants in and around the team’s training ground and match day changing rooms.

7. I agree with data from the study being used for publishing purposes.

8. I agree to take part in the above study.

_______________________________________   ___________________
Signature of Participant                     Date

_______________________________________   ___________________
Name of person taking consent                Date

232
Reference Number:
Cardiff School of Sport Ethics Committee
Research Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: To explore the everyday social rules within coaching

This document provides a run through of:

1) The background and aim of the research,
2) My role as the researcher,
3) Your role as a participant,
4) Benefits of taking part,
5) How data will be collected,
6) How the data / research will be used,
7) Where will data be collected,
8) When data will be collect, and
9) Data storage security.

The purpose of this document is to assist you in making an informed decision about whether you wish to be included in the project, and to promote transparency in the research process.

1) Background and aims of the research

Coaching has come to be increasingly perceived a social and problematic activity (Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2004; Potrac & Jones, 2009). In doing so, Jones and colleagues have used frameworks provided by theorists such as Goffman, Bourdieu and Foucault to better understand the relationships which lie at the heart of the coaching process. A perspective yet to be engaged with in this respect is that of ethno-methodology as encapsulated by the work of Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel’s (1967) work is underpinned by how members of society respond to circumstances in which they find themselves through the use of reasoning procedures and shared knowledge, allowing for an increased understanding of social relationships and subsequent interactions (Jones et al., 2012).

The principal purpose of this study is to explore and deconstruct coaches’ everyday interactions. Specific attention is paid to the rational properties of conduct, as well as to the contextual conditions under which such behaviours occur. In relaxing taken-for-granted social rules, the project purports to investigate how coaches utilise and manipulate their ‘social competencies’ (Jones et al., 2012; Lemert, 1997).

2) My role as the researcher:

The project involves me (Charlie Corsby), the researcher, observing the everyday activities of the football team members. This will involve my direct participation as well as observation. Information will be collected through the use of making notes and audio recordings on a Dictaphone.
3) **Your role as a participant:**
Your role as a participant is to carry on your everyday activities and role within the football team as normal. Participation is not compulsory and you have the right to withdraw or not respond to every, or any question should you wish not to without fear of penalty.

4) **Benefits of taking part:**
The information obtained from the study will allow for a better understanding of the social, complex coaching environment coaches work in. In this respect, it could provide you (the participant) with a greater understanding of the context in which you partake.

5) **How data will be collected:**
As alluded to above, data will be collected through the use of observations, fieldnotes and audio recordings.

6) **How the data / research will be used:**
In agreeing to become a voluntary participant, you will be allowing me to use your interactions within the environment as a part of a larger data set that include further information from other participants. Your personal data will be anonymised (as much as possible) with pseudonyms used to protect your identity.

7) **Where will data be collected:**
Data collection in terms of fieldnotes and observations will be a constant on-going process undertaken by myself throughout the course of the season. This will primarily occur on the training ground and within the dressing room.

8) **When will data be collected:**
As indicated to above, observations will occur whilst you attend the everyday activities within the football club during the season; that is attending training, competitive matches and relevant meetings. The video footage will be collected prior to matches within the dressing rooms and during training.

9) **Data storage security:**
All data collected will be stored on a computer in a password protected folder, with only my supervisory team and I having access to this information.

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**Your rights**

Your right as a voluntary participant is that you are free to enter or withdraw from the study at any time. This simply means that you are in full control of the part you play in informing the research and where visual data are gathered which aspects will be used in its final (public) reporting. This will be undertaken through a process of member checking. This process involves you (the participant) reviewing transcribed
quotes and video footage clips to ensure you are happy with the data collected and any information which may feature within the final report. This will occur formally prior to any final publication, as well as being an on-going process achieved through informal conversations.

**Protection to privacy**

Concerted efforts will be made to hide your identity in any written transcripts, notes, and associated documentation that inform the research and its findings. However, no guarantee of anonymity can be made with the use of the visual data. In any subsequent publication, your approval will be granted prior to any footage shown within a presentation. Where possible, any personal information about you will remain *confidential* according to the guidelines of the Data Protection Act (1998).

**Contact**

If you require any further details, or have any queries, feel free to contact me on the details below.

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